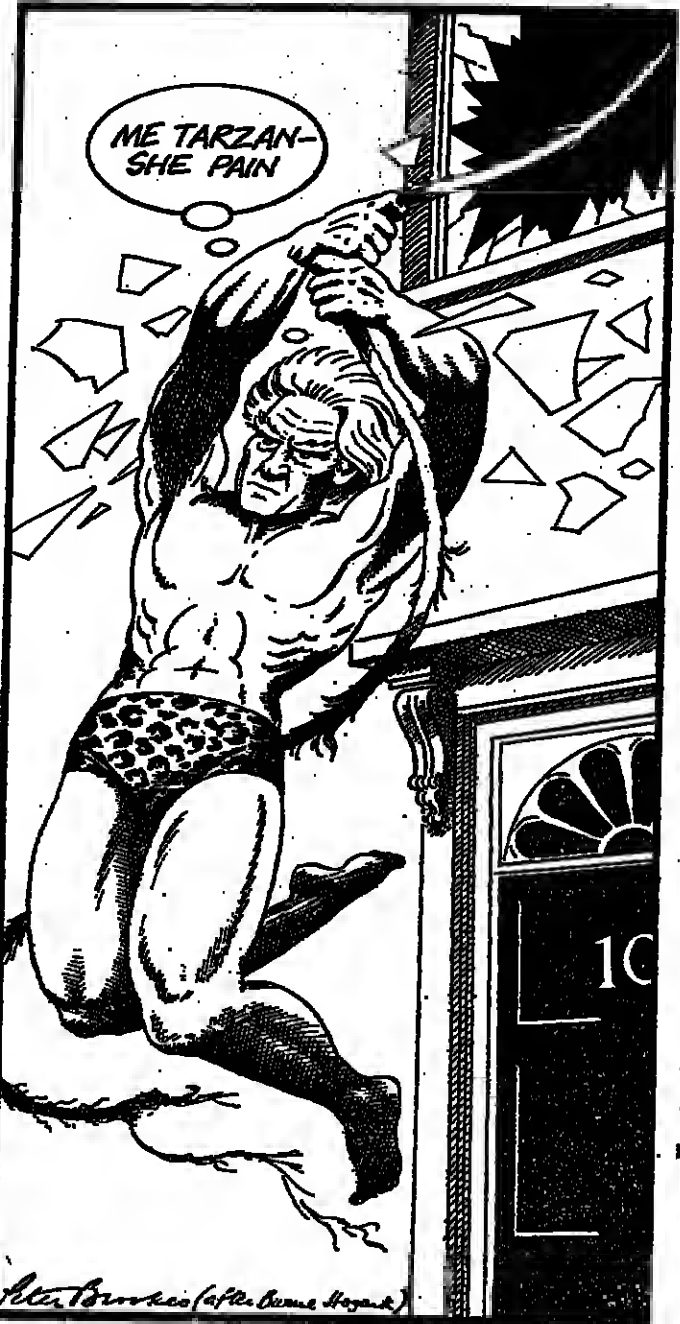


Heseltine resigns over Westland and accuses Thatcher

Prime Minister 'sabotaged rescue'

Tories split by unprecedented public argument

The Conservative Party was split from top to bottom last night over the resignation of its most charismatic Cabinet member - leaving opponents of the Government with a propaganda gift.



Thatcher regret over the lonely rebel

The Prime Minister last night wrote to Mr Michael Heseltine accepting his resignation as Secretary of State for Defence.

Mr Michael Heseltine walked out of a Cabinet meeting and resigned as Secretary of State for Defence, accusing the Prime Minister of sabotaging an Anglo-European rescue attempt of Westland.

Westland shares leapt in price as a big buyer, rumoured to be Mr Alan Bristow, the helicopter millionaire, gathered an important stake in the company.

Mr Heseltine's resignation was a very sad event in the history of the Government and that it would be greatly regretted.

Successor pledges to fall in line

At his first press conference as Secretary of State for Defence, Mr George Younger yesterday reaffirmed the Government's policy of leaving it to Westland shareholders to decide the company's fate.

Mr Younger said that Mrs Thatcher had not approached him about the defence job before Mr Heseltine resigned.

Mr Younger, aged 54, heir to the third Viscount Younger of Leckie, moved towards politics in 1959 when he contested North Lanarkshire.

Mr Younger at his press conference yesterday.

Cabinet stunned by surprise walk-out

Cabinet colleagues were taken completely by surprise at the resignation of Mr Michael Heseltine.

She invited Mr Leon Brittan, Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, sitting opposite, to give his views.

Mr Heseltine, to the left of Mr Brittan and Sir Keith Joseph, again facing the Prime Minister, was said to have supported an even-handed approach and the principle of collective Cabinet responsibility.

Continued on page 2, col 6

Gadaffi threatens to freeze US assets

In a palace guarded by a dozen factory-fresh battle tanks, Colonel Gadaffi, the Libyan leader, last night threatened to freeze all American assets in Libya.

The colonel, dressed in a purple shirt and sleeveless grey jacket, performed his careful sidestep at an hour-long press conference that contrived to be a warning to the United States.

Breast cancer hopes 2,000 women in drug trials

A drug treatment that could prevent breast cancer is to be offered to women volunteers in an experimental project later this year.

Scientists at the Imperial Cancer Research Fund believe that the drug tamoxifen could reduce the number of women developing breast cancer by as much as 50 per cent.

THE TIMES Tomorrow In service Anberon Waugh on employing 'domestics' in 1986 Jumbo winners Answers to our Christmas crossword Inter-galactic Douglas Adams, ever the hitch-hiker Weekend sport Football and rugby previews: racing at Ascot and Newcastle

Portfolio There were two winners of yesterday's £2,000 Times Portfolio competition. Mr J. Raudhwa of London and Mrs Pauline Sagar of Sheffield each receive £1,000.

Jobless up 14,700 to 3.18 million Unemployment rose unexpectedly last month, upsetting the favourable trend of recent months. The adult jobless total rose 14,700 to 3.18 million.

Pound boosted by rate rise The pound, buoyed by Britain's higher level of interest rates, rose nearly 3 cents to \$1.4710 in early New York trading after gaining two-thirds of a cent to \$1.4490 in London.

Out of picture Kodak stopped production of instant cameras and films, writing off tens of millions of dollars in investment, after losing a nine-year court battle with Polaroid.

Killer detained A woman who drowned her son while on probation for the infanticide of his two brothers, was ordered to be detained indefinitely in a mental hospital.

£70m grants The Greater London Council is believed to be planning to transfer £70 million to voluntary organisations as forward funding for selected projects before it is abolished on March 31.

Leisurely life With average male employees working 38.2 hours a week and enjoying at least four weeks' holiday, Britons have more leisure than 10 years ago.

Expulsion plea Spain has suspended an expulsion order against a Briton wanted for questioning about the £26 million Brink's-Mat bullion robbery at Heathrow airport, pending an appeal by his lawyers.

US post purge Mr Paul Carlin has been dismissed as United States Postmaster-General in a move expected to lead to a management purge and cost-cutting measures in the postal service.

Series halted Work on an American television drama series depicting the United States under Russian rule after a KGB coup has been halted.

TV licence plea Extra television licences for people with video recorders and more than one set could solve the BBC's financing problems, the corporation suggested.

Division healed The threat of a breakaway 'Super League' by leading first division clubs has receded following an agreement by second division chairmen to the proposed restructuring of the Football League.

Table with 2 columns: Home News, Overseas, Arts, Features, Court, Crosswords, Diary, Features. Values range from 2-4 to 8-10.

Jermyn Street quality at affordable prices. THE FINEST BRITISH FABRICS. Only the finest fabrics are used to make our shirts. Our cotton shirts are made from pure two-fold cotton poplin, the shirting fabric chosen by the world's most famous shirtmakers.

Heseltine tells of the lengthy battle over Westland

'Deliberate attempt made to avoid discussing issues'

Mr Michael Heseltine, in his press conference statement, said: "I have today tendered my resignation from the Government, not because of the discussion at today's Cabinet but because of the way in which the reconstruction of Westland plc has been handled over a period of months."

This has raised profound issues about defence procurement and Britain's future as a technologically advanced country, issues that however have never been properly addressed by the Government. Indeed, as I shall show, a deliberate attempt has been made to avoid addressing them. This is not a proper way to carry on government and ultimately not an approach for which I can share responsibility.

The background to the Government's policy on helicopter procurement is the 1978 declaration of principles agreed by France, Germany, Italy and the United Kingdom. This provided that each country would make every effort to meet the needs with helicopters developed jointly in Europe.

That policy has thus far been followed through in our future planning. It is entirely consistent with the wider approach to defence procurement set out in the 1985 statement on the defence estimates which emphasized the importance of Europe coming together in an equal partnership with the United States within the North Atlantic alliance.

My own commitment to that alliance and to the strongest and most friendly relations with the United States on a basis of equality could not be clearer.

Lead role in early stages not mine

When Westland plc ran into financial difficulties, partially because of their failure on the civil market, this was not my immediate ministerial responsibility.

I am not the sponsoring minister for the helicopter industry. It would have been quite wrong for me to try to take the lead role in what was a DTI [Department of Trade and Industry] responsibility. It would have been wrong also for the Ministry of Defence alone to bail out the company with orders for which there was not an approved military requirement.

I did, however, make clear throughout that the helicopter industry provided by Westland was essential in some form to our defence needs.

When Sir John Cuckney, who had become the chairman of Westland with my full support and encouragement, first approached the Government about its attitude to potential partners for Westland, there was a close identity of view between the Ministry of Defence and the Department of Trade and Industry.

In view of this identity of view, it was still unnecessary for me to take any direct initiative.

It was recognized that with a Sikorsky shareholding, Westland might tend to become little more than a production facility for Sikorsky and to lose its own helicopter design and development capacity, that a link with European companies would fit better into the developing pattern of European collaboration and that, in many ways, British Aerospace would be the most welcome partner.

The need to explore urgently the European option was recommended by the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry in October 4.

Cuckney well aware of government views

When, on October 17, Sir John Cuckney met the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (Mr Leon Brittan) he said that he was well aware of the Government's preference for a European minority takeover in Westland and attached eight to that preference. The problem was how to bring this about in a timely way.

Over the following weeks there were a number of discussions involving both the European companies and Westland and contacts between European ministers.

I kept in close touch with these and with

the financial position of the company, at one stage I intervened to direct that the MoD's [Ministry of Defence] accounting officer should make a payment of £5 million to Westland that was correctly being withheld from them on grounds of prudent government accounting but that I was satisfied should be made because of the wider issues involved.

As time went on, I became increasingly concerned about progress in the discussions, particularly at a company level.

On November 26, I met Sir John Cuckney and discussed with him where matters stood. He explained the need for urgent action and the strong support for participation by Sikorsky. However, he did not rule out other options provided that they had as much to offer as the Sikorsky alternative. His problem was that he lacked the management resources himself to explore them.

I asked if I could help, having already agreed with the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry that this was acceptable. He welcomed my proposal that I should assist in this process.

For success, ministers had to be involved

The lessons of the negotiations over the European fighter aircraft were in my view clear: without ministerial involvement, it would be very difficult to achieve timely success.

I was not prepared to seek the support of my European ministerial colleagues, unless their efforts would be fairly and properly treated.

Since Sir John Cuckney had in no way ruled out the European alternative and welcomed my offer to explore it, I discussed it with Dr [Manfred] Woerner [West German Defence Minister] the following day and arranged that national armaments directors of the United Kingdom, Germany, Italy and France should meet on November 29, and that the companies involved should also come together the day after.

The national armaments directors reached provisional agreement on the way forward, including a recommendation that, in an extension of the 1978 agreement, their needs within the main helicopter classes should be covered solely in the future by helicopters designed and built in Europe.

Ty also agreed to complete the rationalization of their requirement for helicopters, carrying forward the objectives set out in 1978. As soon as this agreement had been reached, I personally gave a copy to Sir John Cuckney.

Three meetings cleared by Prime Minister

Sir John Cuckney's response was that the agreement that had now been reached would effectively preclude Westland from proceeding with a tie-up with Sikorsky. The subsequent ministerial discussions took place only in the context of this issue, rather than the wider dimension of the Government's approach to the ownership of a major defence capability.

There were three ministerial meetings chaired by the Prime Minister at the beginning of December, two of them a hoc groups on December 4 and 5 and finally a discussion in the ministerial sub-committee on economic strategy on December 9.

The Prime Minister attempted at all three meetings to remove the recommendation of the national armaments directors and thus leave the way clear for the Sikorsky deal.

The ad hoc meetings were both ill tempered attempts to overcome the refusal of some colleagues to thus close off the European option.

The Prime Minister, failing to secure that preference, called a meeting of the sub-committee on economic strategy on December 9. I proposed that the sub-committee should meet on Friday to give the Europeans time to come forward with a proper proposal. If they failed, I said that I would back Sikorsky.

Virtually every colleague who attended



Mr Heseltine leaving Downing Street after his resignation

the enlarged meeting and thus came fresh to the arguments supported me, despite the fact that Sir John Cuckney had been invited to put his views to the meeting.

Time was limited and, as I have said, I was given to the following Friday to come up with such a proposal.

The Prime Minister clearly stated on that Monday that ministers would meet again to consider the result on Friday at 3pm after the Stock Exchange had closed.

There would thus be a further opportunity for colleagues to consider the outcome and to inform the board of their views if they wished. I was content. There was time. There would be further collective discussions.

The Cabinet office subsequently began arrangements for that meeting and a number of Whitehall departments were contacted about the availability of their minister.

These arrangements were, however, cancelled on the instructions of the Prime Minister. Having lost three times, there was to be no question of risking a fourth discussion.

As a result, the meeting on December 9 represents the only occasion on which there was a collective discussion of the issues involved, as opposed simply to the question of their public handling by the Government. By December 13, I produced proposals for ministerial agreement.

A complementary offer by the companies concerned to participate in the reconstruction of Westland was also made that day. They were not addressed collectively, but I circulated them to colleagues.

Following the decision not to proceed with the meeting on December 13, I sought on a number of occasions to have the issues properly addressed.

The first attempt had been at the Cabinet on Thursday December 12. The Prime Minister refused to allow a discussion in

Cabinet that day. I insisted that the Cabinet Secretary should record my protest in the Cabinet minutes.

When the minutes were circulated there was no reference to any discussion about Westland and consequently no record of my protest.

Before the next Cabinet meeting I complained to the Secretary of the Cabinet. He explained that the item had been omitted from the minutes as the result of an error and he subsequently circulated an addendum in the form of a brief note of the discussion. Such an error and correction was unprecedented in my experience.

The minutes, as finally issued, still did not record my protest and I have since informed the Secretary of the Cabinet that I am still not content with the way in which this discussion was recorded.

Westland rejects European proposals

The world is aware that on December 13 the board of Westland rejected, after the briefest discussion, the proposals put forward by a consortium which now included Britain's leading aerospace company, British Aerospace plc.

On December 16 the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry made a statement to the House that, since the Westland board had rejected the British/European consortium proposals, the Government was not bound by the NADS [National Armaments Directors] recommendation.

Effectively he thereby left the way clear for the Sikorsky/Fiat bid.

There followed increasing concern over the defence implications of this decision. The officers of the backbench defence committee of the Conservative Party put out a statement in support of the approach I was taking. I did not solicit that statement.

Subsequently, on December 18, the

House of Commons defence committee, following a private meeting with me, also drew attention to the defence implications. At the Cabinet discussion on December 19 there was again no attempt to address these fundamental issues.

It was laid down that it was the policy of the Government that it was for Westland to decide what was the best course to follow in the best interests of the company and its employees; that no minister was entitled to lobby in favour of one proposal rather than another; and that major issues of defence

procurement were for collective decision. Information about the implications of defence procurement for Westland's workload should be made equally available to both groups as well as to Westland.

I explicitly explained at that meeting that, as the Ministry of Defence was the major customer of Westland, I was bound to answer questions whether from UT/Fiat or from the European consortium about defence procurement aspects.

I also drew attention to the fact that I believed that in the following day events would unfold that demanded collective judgement. I knew at the time, but could not prove, that the British/European proposals would appear next day.

I therefore told the Cabinet that, while it was acceptable that Thursday for the Government to adopt an apparently neutral approach, events would shortly unfold which would demand collective judgement.

Events did so unfold. The following day, December 20, the British/European consortium put forward an offer to Westland that was widely described as superior in every way to the Sikorsky/Fiat alternative. It was rejected out of hand by the Westland board.

Cuckney letter to Prime Minister

I wrote on December 23 to my colleagues setting out my views on the implications of both offers and their comparative merits and asking that the Government should exercise its proper responsibility on so important a matter of defence industrial policy.

I explicitly recognized that the holiday period was a difficult time for such a judgement. But before the directors came out with a final recommendation last Sunday, it would still have been possible for the Government to meet and to restate the preferences so clearly expressed at the outset. My request for a meeting was refused by the Prime Minister.

Two further events must be recorded. Sir John Cuckney wrote on December 30 to the Prime Minister seeking assurances about the position of the company should they proceed with a Sikorsky/Fiat link.

These assurances were sought directly in relation to a letter sent by the Ministry of Defence at my direction to the company. The fundamental issue raised by Sir John Cuckney related to defence procurement issues for which I was the Secretary of State with the individual ministerial responsibility. In the proper conduct of government business, Sir John's letter would have been referred to my department for advice and a draft reply.

In this case, the Prime Minister's private secretary sent the letter to the Department of Trade and Industry and asked for a draft reply, cleared as appropriate with other departments and the law officers.

He asked for it to be submitted by 4pm the following day. The letter from 10 Downing Street set out the line which the Prime Minister proposed to take.

When I received my copy of the letter the following morning, I pointed out that these were matters within my ministerial responsibility, but the letter was not transferred to my department for answer.

I also pointed that the line which the Prime Minister proposed to take was entirely misleading.

The Secretary of Trade and Industry prepared a draft reply which was referred to the law officers only at my express request. A reply with which all concerned could live was eventually hammered out at about 10pm on New Year's Eve.

I subsequently amplified those parts of the reply that sought to hide the reality of Westland's position in relation to potential European partners and prospects for orders from the Ministry of Defence in the medium term, in a letter of January 3 to Lloyds Merchant Bank, which I copied to Sir John Cuckney.

Letter is sent by the Solicitor General

I was informed the following day by the Solicitor General that, on the basis of the evidence which he had thus far seen, my letter contained material inaccuracies. He wrote to me in this sense on Monday January 6.

Within two hours of my receiving his letter, damaging selective passages had been leaked to the Press Association. I cannot comment on the source of these leaks on which there will no doubt be a full inquiry in the normal way. No one can doubt their purpose.

I subsequently on January 6 set out to the Solicitor General some of the further evidence at my disposal about the attitude of other governments and other companies and informed Lloyds Merchant Bank by letter on that day that my answer needed no correction.

The Government, in its official position, has sought to suggest that it has adopted an even-handed approach between the viable offers. In practice throughout, the attempt has been made to remove any obstacles to the offer by Sikorsky/Fiat, even to the extent of changing existing government policy.

Although, as I explained earlier, at the outset there was a clear recognition of the attractions of involvement by Aerospace, I understand that last night the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, in the presence of another minister in his department and his officials, told Sir Raymond Lygo of British Aerospace that the role which British Aerospace were taking in the European consortium was against the national interest and that British Aerospace should withdraw.

So much for the wish of the sponsoring department to leave the matter to the shareholders on the basis of the most attractive choice available to them.

Finally, we come to today's Cabinet. It was suggested that any questions in connection with the competing offers for Westland should be referred by all ministers to the Cabinet Office to be handled by them in the first instance.

I refused to abandon my assurances

To have done so would have been to imply doubt and delay in any and every part of the assurances I had publicly given on behalf of my ministry and of my European colleagues. Such a procedure would have allowed the advocates of the Sikorsky proposals to make mayhem over what is now the superior British/European offer.

While I agreed that all new policy issues could be referred to the Cabinet Office, I refused to abandon or qualify in any way assurances I have given or my right as the responsible minister to answer questions on defence procurement issues in line with policies my colleague have not contradicted.

The Prime Minister properly summed up the view of Cabinet that all answers should be referred for collective clearance. I could not accept that constraint in the critical few days before the Westland shareholders decide. I had no choice but to accept or to resign. I left the Cabinet.

To be Secretary of State for Defence in a Tory Government is one of the highest distinctions one can achieve.

To serve as a member of a Tory Cabinet within the constitutional understandings and practices of a system under which the Prime Minister is prime minister is a memory I will always treasure.

But if the basis of trust between the Prime Minister and her Defence Secretary no longer exists, there is no place for me with honour in such a Cabinet.

Charisma that lost out to obduracy

By Rodney Cowton
Defence Correspondent

The Westland controversy that culminated yesterday in the resignation of Mr Michael Heseltine as Secretary of State for Defence was a situation which, from his point of view, got out of control.

When in November he began assembling his European consortium he must have thought that with Westland's three main European competitors, and above all their governments, lined up in support, Westland would be unable to resist their rescue offer.

What he seems not to have reckoned with was the obduracy of Sir John Cuckney, Westland's chairman who, like Mr Heseltine, is an old boy of Shrewsbury School, and his feet up and wearing a dark-blue long-sleeved pullover. When going into a hall to deliver a speech he would briefly agonize over whether it would be so warm that he should remove the pullover from under his jacket. Doing so, he would mutter, "I'm a Minister, strip-tease". He has little side, and when he had a formal engagement, he could on occasion, be seen arriving at the ministry carrying his morning suit on a coat hanger.

Return to home base

Before he moved to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office three years ago, Mr Malcolm Rifkind was regarded as a front runner to succeed Mr George Younger (Ronald Faux writes). There was little surprise at the Scottish Office yesterday that he had been invited back.

The MP for Edinburgh, Pentlands is aged 39 and will probably be the youngest member of the Cabinet and the youngest man to hold the century-old office of Secretary of State for Scotland.

At home in Edinburgh yesterday, where he was re-covering from a bout of flu, Mr Rifkind said his new job was the most significant honour and responsibility that any Scottish MP could be asked to accept. Mr Younger, he said, would be "a hard act to follow".

Mr Rifkind graduated in law at Edinburgh University. Before entering Parliament he

practised as an advocate in the City. He became a QC last year. He is quick-thinking and highly articulate, occasionally too articulate for lobby reporters, who have timed his delivery at more than 200 words a minute.

His last job at the Scottish Office was Minister for Home Affairs and the Environment. In his dealings with Scottish local authorities with responsibility for local government finance, he was able to deliver disagreeable advice on behalf of the government and yet retain the respect of the councils. A quality he shares with Mr Younger.

Some observers questioned Mr Rifkind's ready acceptance of the Scottish Office. He had developed a specialist interest in European affairs at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and was clearly well thought of

He has boundless energy. On a visit to the Falkland Islands two years ago, with an almost impossibly cruel, he insisted on two occasions on getting up at dawn to visit colonies of terns and penguins.

These human qualities are, however, matched by a degree of determination that can lead to him riding rough-shod over people. In 1984 when he was planning the reorganization of the central defence staffs, he told the then Chief of the Defence Staff, Field Marshal Sir Edwin Bramall, of his intentions only two days before publishing them.

When his mind is made up he can be abrupt with those who dissent. "That is the way it is, sir marshal". The prospect of his appointment to the ministry was not welcomed by the armed Forces, and although he has readily commanded the respect of most of those who had to work most closely with him, and perhaps, somewhat grudgingly, from a wider circle as well, there are many who remain fundamentally hostile to him.

There is a well-developed feeling that in his pursuit of efficiency, and his attempts to squeeze the maximum benefit from the resources devoted to defence he has caused unreasonable demands to be made on rank-and-file servicemen. His three years at Defence fall into two clear phases: first a period of more than two years when most things seemed to go his way, and then during the course of last year the development of the job into a dull, hard slog to maintain existing defence policy within increasingly severe financial constraints.

Although he was not ministerially involved in the Falklands conflict, he went to Defence six months after the Argentine surrender when a grateful Prime Minister and nation were happy to lavish largesse on the Armed Forces.

Heavy defence workload ahead for Younger

Mr George Younger will find a very full in-tray awaiting him when he takes up his appointment of Secretary of State for Defence (Rodney Cowton writes).

That he should come to this job just now is ironic, for it was only last week that he suffered a severe political defeat at the hands of Mr Heseltine, and the Ministry of Defence, with the announcement that contracts for four submarines were to be placed with the Vickers Shipbuilding and Engineering group for construction on Merseyside and at Barrow-in-Furness. Mr Younger, as Secretary of State for Scotland, had fought to ensure that at least one of them would be built north of the border.

Nimrod Airborne Early Warning Aircraft Critical negotiations are in progress between GEC and the Secretary of State to find a way of completing, at acceptable cost, this disastrous project which is at least five years late and has so far cost about £1 billion.

Among the matters which

Tories split

Continued from page 1

Mrs Thatcher and "confirms one's worst suspicions of her autocratic, dictatorial style."

"Suppressing independent advice, manipulating Cabinet sub-committees, refusing collective discussion and rewriting Cabinet minutes is damning evidence of a total contempt for democratic Cabinet government. At last someone has been man enough to stand up to her," he added.

Mr Alan Bell, deputy leader of the Liberal party, said Mr Heseltine had lifted the lid on what went on in Mrs Thatcher's Cabinet. It showed the government was run on an autocratic basis with the Cabinet Office serving "as the means of enforcing the Prime Minister's will".

Within the Conservative party last night opinion was sharply divided over Mr Heseltine's conduct, and its likely effect on Mrs Thatcher and her Government.

At one extreme, Mr Michael Bates, Conservative MP for Hampshire, East and Mr Heseltine's closest confidant during the Westland saga, said the Defence Secretary's position had been made impossible by yesterday's Cabinet meeting, and resignation was the only honourable course.

"The fact it has ended like this can only be damaging... It is a very serious setback for the Government; there is no question about it."

On the other hand, Sir Richard Body, Conservative MP for Holland and Easton, said the "great majority" within the Conservative party had looked very unfavourably upon the way Mr Heseltine had behaved in recent weeks.

"There is more to be gained with forward than with backward. These are the only ways of trying to become Prime Minister."

European group will press on with offer

By Edward Townsend, Industrial Correspondent

The Anglo-European consortium, led by the General Electric Company and British Aerospace, yesterday reaffirmed its intention to press ahead with its offer for Westland despite the resignation.

Mr David Horne, managing director of Lloyds Merchant Bank, which is advising the consortium, said he was dumbfounded by Mr Heseltine's move. Earlier, he said, Mr Heseltine had been "delighted that we were so confident of winning."

Mr Horne and senior BAE officials said the resignation did not affect the commercial aspects of the offer.

The consortium, led by Sir Raymond Lygo, chief executive

NUT to join talks at Acas

By Lucy Hodges

The National Union of Teachers agreed yesterday to take part in next Tuesday's talks at the conciliation service, Acas, aimed at finding a solution to the teachers' pay dispute. But it is refusing to sit with the other teachers' unions and will be in a room of its own.

There has been some doubt about whether the NUT would take part because of its disagreement with the new majority on the teachers' panel over the basic for going to Acas. But the biggest teachers' union is understood to be under considerable pressure from the TUC and other union leaders to participate.

The National Union of Railwaymen and the train drivers' union Aslef, have sent a letter to Mr Norman Willis, TUC general secretary, expressing "grave concern" that, in the event of industrial action, the international would switch the distribution of *The Times*, *The Sunday Times*, *The Sun* and *News of the World* from British companies to TNT, a road haulage company in which the newspaper group has corporate links.

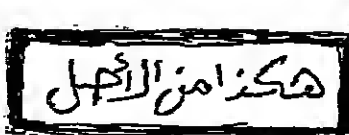
Rail warning on Post deal

The role of Cable & Adorne in next week's Royal Opera House production of *Simon Boccanegra*, which is reported on January 7, will no longer be filled by Placido Domingo, will be sung by the Italian tenor, Giorgio Merighi.

Correction

The Times overseas selling prices listed in the 1985-86 edition of the *Yearbook of Statistics*, published in London, were incorrect. The correct prices are listed below.

Subscription prices for 1986: UK £12.00, Europe £14.00, USA & Canada \$24.00, elsewhere \$28.00. Single copies 5p. The Times is published daily except on Sundays and public holidays. It is printed on acid-free paper. The paper is 100% recycled. The paper is 100% recycled. The paper is 100% recycled.



Mother killed her son aged eight while on probation for infanticide

From Peter Davenport
Chester

A mother who killed her son aged eight while on probation for the infanticide of his two brothers was yesterday ordered to be detained indefinitely in a special hospital.

Sandra Riley, aged 33, denied the murder of her son, Andrew, but admitted manslaughter on the grounds of diminished responsibility. She also admitted deliberately setting fire to the family home while her son was playing inside, a year before his death.

Chester Crown Court was told that the boy's last words as his mother drowned him in the bath were: "Don't kill me, mum".

The court was told that four medical reports agreed that Riley, of Brocklehurst Avenue, Macclesfield, Cheshire, was suffering from a psychopathic disorder which made her a danger to herself and others.

But when she appeared before the same court in October 1983 charged with the infanticide of her two sons, she was released on probation after medical reports said she had been suffering from post-natal depression at the time, and she was no danger to her remaining son, Andrew. A condition of probation was that she should receive psychiatric treatment.

Yesterday the judge, Mr Justice Todor Price, told her: "While there may be obvious public and private concern in his sad case that you should have had the opportunity to kill Andrew, the function of this court on this occasion is confined to disposing of the offences of manslaughter and infanticide."

"I am satisfied that the evidence and information be-

fore this court is that this tragedy occurred because of your mental illness."

The judge ordered that Riley should be detained, without time limit, at the Moss Side Special Hospital in Liverpool, under section 37 of the Mental Health Act.

Earlier, the court had been told by Mr Gareth Williams, QC, for the prosecution, of a

chronology of events in the life of Riley which resulted in the deaths of all her four sons, three by her own hands with the other attributed to a cot death.

Andrew was drowned in a bath on the night of April 11, 1985, four months after he was taken off the at-risk register of the Cheshire social services department, and just a year after he had been rescued from the fire that authorities at the time had accepted as accidental.

The court was told that after she had killed her son, Riley had pretended to neighbours that he had taken an overdose of tablets, but police who were called to the house found scratches and bruising on the boy and traces in his finger nails that showed he had been fighting for his life as he was drowned.

In a statement read to the court, Riley said that after her husband, Brian, had gone out for the night, she had run a bath for herself and her son.

"I washed him, and shampooed his hair. He was in the bath facing me. I grabbed hold of him, pulled him towards me, and then pushed him under the water. He shouted 'Doo! kill me, mum.'"

"He struggled and almost climbed out twice, but I got him back in. I held him under the water and it may have been then that he hit his head on the taps. After that, he went still. I let go of him and he floated face down in the water."

Mr Rhye Davies, QC, for the defence, said: "So far as this tragic incident relating to the death of her child is concerned, Mrs Riley has no explanation as to how it happened, or why. She can only say that up to the time she was bathing him, everything was all right."

Throughout the 20-minute hearing, Riley sat in the dock next to a woman prison officer. She showed no emotion as she was sentenced.

After the case, the director of Cheshire's social services department, Mr David Wakefield, defended the actions of his social workers and the probation service. He said that with hindsight the psychiatric reports of the earlier case may have underestimated Riley's condition, but the decision of the court to release her back to the family home effectively tied the hands of his department.



Sandra Riley and her son Andrew whom she killed

'Nothing could have been done' care chief says

Mr David Wakefield, director of social services for Cheshire, said he was satisfied that "there was nothing which could have been done which wasn't done, which might have led to a situation where Andrew was five today."

He said that after the death he and his colleagues undertook an immediate, internal investigation, carried out by a solicitor from the county secretary's department and an assistant director of social services.

"There was no evidence that he had acted outside

Mr Wakefield has called for a comprehensive review of the law which balances the rights of children against the rights of adults. "The balance has been strongly with the adults recently," he said.

"We need some kind of opportunity within the court structure to consider evidence and professional judgements in a non-adversarial way and in a non-adversarial place, something akin to the Scottish family courts."

However, he said that "the difficulty in this case was that all the evidence was that Andrew wasn't at risk". That was a judgement shared by all the professionals involved in the case. "There was certainly nothing on the basis of which we could have taken care proceedings, especially in a case where the court had made a judgement placing his mother on probation backed by psychiatric and medical evidence."

An inter-departmental committee of officials from the Home Office and the Lord Chancellor's Department is expected to report by Easter on the possible forms that a family court in England and Wales might take. (Our Legal Affairs Correspondent writes.)

Pressure for a family court has mounted in the past few months after cases such as the death of Jasmine Beckford and a Family Court Campaign backed by more than 100 national bodies, MPs and academics was launched in November to press the Government for a commitment.

At present family law issues such as child custody and child protection are dealt with by different courts with resulting delay and confusion.

Warning on boy's life is denied

Andrew's grandmother, Mrs Lillian Riley, aged 60, claims she told Mrs Linda Simpson, a social worker she feared for the boy's life, a claim denied by Cheshire Social Services department.

"When she was first released from the remand centre I went to the social services office three or four times. I told the social worker that Andrew wasn't safe and that she would kill him eventually."

Mrs Simpson said she couldn't see it. But she knew he wasn't safe. She told me that if anything happened to Bryan (Andrew's father) the boy would be taken off Sandra the same day."

After the hearing, Mrs Riley said: "Now it is up to the experts to decide when she can be freed. They made a mistake last time and set her free to kill poor Andrew. She should have been detained for at least 20 years."

The boy's father, Mr Brian Riley, who now lives with a woman and her two young children in Macclesfield said that he never believed Andrew was at risk. But he added: "She is either very sick or very evil. She was on remand for six months under constant observation. They should have picked up what was wrong with her instead of diagnosing post-natal depression."

"Looking back, the probation officer couldn't have done any more."

"She wouldn't go to the psychiatrists on her own and Mrs Simpson would pick her up in the car and take her. I can't blame Mrs Simpson for what happened."

Since the court case in October 1983:

- Social workers saw Andrew more than 50 times;
- His mother was seen 75 times in 76 weeks;
- Probation officer, whose main concern was with Mrs Riley, saw her 36 times;
- He also saw Andrew on five occasions;
- School used to check for signs of injury;
- Departmental policies. They had discharged their responsibilities in behalf of the other agencies in a satisfactory way," he said.

A second, independent review, ordered because of public concern, concluded that the family was offered every possible service and he could see no grounds to recommend a further inquiry.

The social worker on the case, Mrs Linda Simpson, aged 7, was one of the most qualified and experienced in the department with 17 years of social work. The probation officer had 16 years' experience.

Mr Wakefield's department has 378 children on its at risk register.

BBC suggests fee for videos

The BBC suggested yesterday that extra television licences for people with more than one set and video recorder could solve its cash problems and at the same time published evidence that most of the public would prefer advertising rather than a licence fee as a way of financing the corporation.

The BBC's second submission to the Peacock committee, which is examining its funding, reaffirmed the corporation's commitment to the licence fee and says it is the sum of finance available to public service broadcasting.

But the evidence suggests that ways of spreading the cost of television more evenly throughout society must be found, then extra licences for video users and people with more than one set could account for between 100 million and £200 million of the corporation's required £1,000 million income.

The measures put forward for consideration by the BBC

ITV holiday ratings blow

The BBC yesterday claimed victory in the Christmas television ratings battle, winning 54.4 per cent of the total audience in the week ending December 29 and beating independent television's night special, *Master on the Orient Express* (12.5 million viewers), with its own *Only Fools and Horses* (16.9 million).

The annual holiday tussle gave the corporation nine out of

Warning on boy's life is denied

the top 10 ratings, its best showing in recent years and one attributed to the scheduling skills of Michael Grade, controller of BBC 1.

The only independent television programme to reach the top 10 was *Coronation Street*. The first two positions were taken by the omnibus editions of *EastEnders*, (25 million viewers each).



Police armed with sub-machine guns to counter any possible terrorist activity at Heathrow (Photograph: Bill Warhurst).

Three die in fire at rest home

Detectives and forensic experts were yesterday sifting through the debris of a rest home in Exeter, Devon, after an early morning fire that killed three elderly women (Tim Jones writes).

The dead women are Mrs Mavis Joy, aged 59, Mrs Elizabeth Trot, aged 77, and Mrs Margaret Madge, aged 62. They were among 31 residents rescued from the burning building, but died on their way to hospital.

Nine other elderly residents, three members of staff and Mr Terence Barrell, a fire officer, were detained in hospital suffering burns and the effects of smoke.

A police spokesman said: "Arson cannot be ruled out."

Machine-gun patrols protect Heathrow

Uniformed police carrying sub-machine-guns appeared for the first time in public in Britain yesterday patrolling terminal three departure lounge at Heathrow Airport alongside Mr Michael Spicer, Minister for Aviation.

Mr Spicer said: "We hope this will not be a permanent feature of the British landscape, but both Government and police are determined that we shall respond in kind to the new tactics being adopted by terrorists."

Intensified security at Heathrow, where for the past eight days armed soldiers as well as police have been mingling with passengers in terminal three, came after terrorist attacks on Israeli

Father may testify at child inquiry

Andrew Neil, who is serving a life sentence for murdering his daughter, Tyra Henry, aged 20 months, is to be asked if he wishes to submit evidence to an inquiry into the handling of the case by social workers and other agencies, it was announced yesterday.

A preliminary hearing for the inquiry, chaired by Mr Stephen Sedley, QC, opened yesterday at Lambeth town hall to decide who would be offering evidence. The inquiry itself is expected to begin on February 10.

Lambeth ratepayers and the local health authority may face a bill of more than £25,000 for Mr Sedley's services. He was appointed at a flat fee of £7,500, with £750 a day.

Sprays can halt spread of cold virus

By Pearce Wright
Science Editor

The days of the common cold are numbered. After 50 years of resistance to the efforts of medical research to stop the runny nose, a way has been found of halting the spread of the most prevalent cold virus.

The advance comes after experiments by several international medical teams, including the Common Cold Research Unit at Salisbury in Wiltshire, with natural antiviral agents such as interferon and interferic, which can be produced by genetic engineering.

The first attempts to perfect a cure also produced side-effects resembling influenza, so research turned to prevention.

The latest results of trials by separate groups in Australia and the United States, using a nasal spray with the same active ingredient, alpha-interferon, show a high success rate in preventing the transmission from infected to healthy members of families and other contacts.

The details of the treatments tried by a team working with Dr Robert Douglas at the University of Adelaide and with Dr Frederick Haydeco of the University of Virginia School of Medicine, are described in the current issue of the *New England Journal of Medicine*.

The results from the two studies are almost identical, providing confidence in the findings. They both show that when the cold was caused by rhinovirus, the most common agent of infection, the nasal spray was almost 80 per cent effective. About half of common colds come into this category.

There are, however, more than 200 distinct strains that produce sniffles, against which the nasal spray was less effective, preventing spreading in only 39 per cent of cases in the respective Australian and American studies.

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7' x 5' £2,750	6' x 4' £49	10' x 8' £790
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6' x 4' £950	(All sizes are approximate. prices incl. VAT)	

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GP trainees criticized for poor knowledge on disease and drugs

By Nicholas Timmins, Social Services Correspondent

Stinging criticism of the standards achieved by doctors training to become general practitioners, and of some of the doctors who train them, has come from the chief examiner of the Royal College of General Practitioners.

In a report to the regional advisors who oversee GPs' training, Dr Andrew Belton says that most candidates seem unable to construct a logical argument, orally or in writing. Most were unable to demonstrate any critical appreciation of drug trials; basic statistics appeared to be a language from another world; and most did not appear to read medical journals.

A surprisingly high number of candidates had a poor knowledge of how to manage chronic diseases such as hypertension or obstructive lung disease and there was a lack of rational prescribing of drugs in managing such conditions, the report adds.

It says that in spite of a campaign by the college to improve general practice, encouraging GPs to "audit" their performance by comparing it with other doctors, most candidates in the oral examination appeared to have neither the inclination nor the opportunity to demonstrate any evidence of quality control in day-to-day practice. The use of the term "audit" produced an air of cynical disbelief, the report says.

The college's examination is usually taken by doctors who have qualified and are at the end of the three years' specialist training that doctors have to undergo before they can become general practitioners in their own right.

The examination is not compulsory, but most trainee GPs take it, as do some GPs who became family doctors before specialist training was compulsory.

Dr Belton said concern had to be expressed about the 50 or so candidates who scored below 25 per cent on the multiple choice paper. That reflected an ignorance that could inspire only lack of confidence in colleagues and patients.

One candidate, a principal in general practice, scored less than 5 per cent.

The report criticizes some family doctors who teach trainees in their own practices.

Dr Belton says there was deep anxiety about the standard of training received by candidates in some practices, and that the number appeared to be increasing.

Those candidates appeared to have a workload higher than that of any of the established family doctors in the practice who were meant to be training them. They appeared to receive no teaching, and to be allowed no opportunity for self-education, or encouragement to appraise critically the delivery of health care in the practice or the community.

Those candidates receive "a very raw deal" in their training, the report says. Trainees should spend the year's experience in general practice, which is part of the three-year course, in different practices to avoid such a situation, it adds.

Dr Belton says that the examining panel felt candidates' inability to write plainly or argue logically must represent inability to communicate with anybody else.

Dr Bill Styles, secretary of the college, said that the report was designed to help advisers and course organizers to improve training. "It is not a great disaster but a way of informing people of some of the problems," he said.

The pass rate for the college's examination is about 74 per cent for those undergoing the vocational training, and about 68 per cent for other candidates. The college is to send a report to the Committee for Postgraduate Training in General Practice.

Dr Styles said that vocational training in the past 10 years had raised the standards of general practice by improving the quality of entrants and improving the practices which do the training.



Miss Carol Vaughan, of the Stratford-upon-Avon Butterfly Farm, with a Giant Owl Butterfly, in what is said to be the world's smallest tropical rain forest. The 6ft by 6ft by 8ft glass box, reproduces exactly the heat, humidity and conditions of a South-east Asian jungle, and is being shown at the Travel Trade Fair which began yesterday at the National Exhibition Centre, Birmingham (Photograph: Peter Trierover).

Prince asks architects to study inner cities

By Charles Knevitt, Architecture Correspondent

The Prince of Wales has asked the Royal Institute of British Architects to prepare a study of what can be done to revive Britain's decaying inner cities. The inquiry is likely to take six months.

Mr Fred Lloyd Roche, honorary treasurer of the institute and former general manager of Milkon Keynes Development Corporation, will head the study team.

He is likely to appoint members of the institute's community architecture group, set up 10 years ago. Mr Rod Hackney, the architect from Macclesfield who is already preparing a report for the Prince on last year's riots in the Handsworth area of Birmingham, is another probable choice.

A report in today's issue of the trade weekly *Building Design* suggests that the royal request will mend any rift that might have remained after the Prince's controversial speech to architects at Hampton Court Palace in 1984.

Campaign is launched to assist the mentally ill

Ten mental health organizations have joined forces to launch a new Schizophrenia Alliance with a manifesto demanding that central government, health authorities and local councils commit more resources to the caring for the mentally ill.

"The policy of closing large mental hospitals is failing because of a lack of community care facilities", the new alliance said yesterday.

"Patients suffering from schizophrenia are being discharged without adequate accommodation and support and families of sufferers are finding difficulty in getting a hospital place for their relative."

"A comprehensive range of services for people suffering from chronic mental illness must be created before hospitals are closed, and many saved by closure must be directed in enhancing and developing such services, the alliance adds.

National Gallery director to go

One of the most coveted jobs in the artistic world, the directorship of the National Gallery, London, became open to applicants yesterday with the resignation of Sir Michael Levey, who has held the post since 1973.

Sir Michael will retire next January, six months before his sixtieth birthday. He has been expected to leave the gallery for some time to concentrate on writing.

The task of finding a replacement is likely to take the gallery trustees some months.

Tributes to Gee and Lynott

Showbusiness personalities, including Les Dennis, Dana, The Kramlicks and Coronation Street's Elizabeth Dawn and Thelma Barlow, were among mourners at the funeral yesterday in Fulford, York, for Dustin Gee, the television comedian, who died in his dressing room last Friday.

At Richmond, south-west London, family and friends of Phil Lynott, the rock singer, paid tribute to him at a Requiem Mass.

Firechief inquiry

The Home Office is to carry out an inquiry into the dismissal of Derbyshire's former chief fire officer, Mr Trevor Slevin, who lost his job last September over disciplinary charges connected with drink driving and unauthorized expenditure on fire service equipment.

£1,000 houses

DIY enthusiasts are flocking to buy 38 vandalized terraced houses at Siddick, near Wokington, West Cumbria, which Alteredale council is offering for sale at £1,000 each to prevent the former mining village from being demolished.

Kirsty 'stable'

Kirsty MacDonald, the baby who had heart defects corrected by a miniature balloon when only two-days old, was described yesterday as "still very poorly, but reasonably stable" at Killingbeck Hospital, Leeds.

NUM calls in TUC against electricians

From David Felton, Labour Correspondent in Sheffield

The National Union of Mineworkers yesterday called on the TUC to launch disciplinary action against the electricians' union for establishing the links with the breakaway miners' union.

An executive meeting in Sheffield decided to call for action under the TUC's disciplinary rule 13, which could, if TUC leaders find the case proven, lead to the expulsion from the congress of the Electrical Electronic Telecommunication and Plumbing Union.

The EETPU will today censure leaders of the Union of Democratic Mineworkers at its Kent education centre for a conference on energy policy. UDM officials are hoping that the meeting could be the forerunner to the establishment of a formal link with the electricians.

With the move by the NUM against the electricians' union a second front of attack was opened against the EETPU which is already facing the possibility of disciplinary action by the TUC if the union makes a deal with Mr Rupert Murdoch on a no-strike agreement for the proposed London Post.

Mr Arthur Scargill, NUM president, said after the execu-

Closure of private hospital

Competition from United States and Arab-owned private hospitals has contributed to the closure of the private 68-bed Nightingale Bupa Hospital in London, which is run by the non-profit making Nuffield Hospitals group (Nicholas Timmins writes).

The hospital, in Lissoo Grove, St Marylebone, is to close from April 30 in spite of a refurbishment of the building at a cost of more than £2.5 million by Bupa and Nuffield Hospitals only eight years ago.

Nuffield Hospitals, with 32 hospitals containing about 1300 acute beds, will remain the largest private provider of surgical beds, ahead of American Medical International which has 1250 acute beds in 13 hospitals. Mr Oliver Rowell, Nuffield Hospitals' general manager, said yesterday that the closure reflected "the continued investment by the commercial 'for profit' hospital operators coupled with the growing number of private patients preferring to undergo routine treatment away from the centre of London".

The Nightingale, he continued, had provided costly to maintain and develop, and its location deterred patients and consultants.

Sharp rise in racial violence

Increases in racial attacks ranging from more than a quarter to 72 per cent in different parts of east London in the past year have been recorded by monitoring organizations.

In Tower Hamlets, 495 separate assaults were reported to the Community Alliance for Police Accountability, according to its annual report. Among the more serious incidents were 15 actual or attempted arson attacks.

A 72 per cent increase in racial attacks last year was recorded by Greenwich Action Committee against Racist Attacks.

Air gun attacks on black families were quite common. The Newham Monitoring Project also records airguns being used to shoot at black families and Asian families, and a "couple" of incidents involving airguns are also known in Tower Hamlets.

Social Trends: Leisure, wealth and health

Workers get more time for leisure

By Robin Young

A steady fall in average working hours, down to 38.2 hours for male full-time employees by 1984, and increasing holiday entitlements (95 per cent of full-time manual employees now get four weeks or more), have given people more time to spend about the home and at leisure, according to Government statistics published in *Social Trends*.

Women still do most of the day-to-day running of the home, although married men and women believe men should do more.

Government statisticians have also detected a marked tendency for married men to overstate the extent to which they share the housework. Fourteen per cent of married men claim to share equal responsibility for general domestic duties, but only 7 per cent of married women accept that they do.

In spite of such domestic disagreements and the strains of modern life, marriage is holding up better than might be expected. Just under four fifths of people living in private households in 1983 still lived in married couple families, a proportion which has fallen only slightly since 1961.

The number of marriages in 1984 - 396,000 - was 9,000 more than at the low point in 1982.

The number of divorces in England and Wales, by contrast, has declined slowly since reaching a peak in 1980. In all, 158,000 divorce decrees were made absolute in 1984, double the number in 1971 when the Divorce Reform Act came into force. A fresh rash of petitions began in October 1984 when a change in the law permitted people to petition for divorce after only one year of marriage.

There has been a sharp decline in the number of teenage marriages. In 1984, one in six spinsters marrying was a teenager, whereas a decade earlier it would have been more than one in three. That may have implications for the future divorce rate because spouses who marry in their teens are almost twice as likely to divorce as those who marry between the ages of 20 and 24.

Even among those who do not marry there are indications that relationships might be becoming more stable.

As in 1976, there are still 39 per cent of adult residents who never take a holiday, but a growing number take more than one.

Britain more prosperous and less inequitable

By David Smith, Economics Correspondent

Britain has become more prosperous and equitable during the past 10 years, according to *Social Trends*. Real income a head, in spite of falling to two recessions since 1974, was 16.3 per cent above its 1974 level in 1984.

Between 1980 and 1984, real household disposable income a head rose by 6 per cent, as wages and salaries kept ahead of inflation.

Social Trends records that marketable wealth for individuals totalled £745 billion in 1983, the latest year for which figures are available.

On that definition alone, the wealthiest 1 per cent of the population owned 20 per cent of all wealth in 1983, down from 31 per cent in 1971. The richest 5 per cent owned 40 per cent of wealth, down from 52 per cent in 1971.

The wealth distribution, on this definition, has not percolated down to the poorest half of the population. In 1971 the bottom-off 50 per cent of the population owned 97 per cent of marketable wealth. By 1983, that share had edged down to 96 per cent.

WEALTH		%			
		1971	1976	1982	1983
Marketable wealth owned by:	Wealthiest 1%	31	24	20	20
	5%	52	45	40	40
	10%	67	60	55	54
	20%	87	86	86	86
	Total wealth	£140bn	£283bn	£602bn	£745bn

Source: *Social Trends*

Young adults' volunteer scheme sought by SDP

By Howard Underwood

A national community volunteer service scheme to bring about a big expansion in social services, health, education and environmental protection provision was launched yesterday by the Social Democratic Party.

In the latest of a number of policy discussion papers the party says that a scheme to develop the wide-scale community involvement of Britain's young adults is vital to national renewal.

It singles out for confrontation two specific crises: disillusionment, particularly among the young, and an acute lack of care for the sick, elderly and increasing numbers of one-parent families.

The Government should set up an enterprising national community volunteer service agency and appoint individuals to its board. These would broadly represent the interests of volunteer groups: trade union, professionals, young people and statutory service, but would not be appointed by or accountable to those interests.

The agency would be responsible to a government minister who would be accountable to Parliament. It should be given guidelines to work by and a budget which would allow it to run a core of schemes itself and to fund other organizations to run schemes.

Leading article, page 11

Male life expectancy up 12 years in half century

Life expectancy for men has increased by 12 years in the past half-century, and by 14 years for women. A cow-born boy can therefore expect to live to the age of 70 and a girl to 76, according to *Social Trends*.

But the increase in longevity has led to a big increase in the number of one-person pensioner households and these are expected to increase by a further one million to 3.7 million by the year 2001. The increase has important implications for public expenditure, the report says.

The report shows dramatic reductions during the past 30 years in infectious diseases with diphtheria and polio now almost eradicated, but with whooping cough becoming more common in the late 1970s and early 1980s after scares over the safety of the vaccine. Only about two-thirds of children are vaccinated while about 95 per cent would need to be for whooping cough to be almost eliminated.

Life expectation (UK)

	1981		1981	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
From birth	68.4	72.4	68.5	72.2
From age				
1 year	62.1	65.1	65.1	75.1
10 years	55.6	58.6	58.6	67.2
15 years	51.1	54.0	55.9	62.2
20 years	46.7	49.6	51.2	57.4
25 years	42.4	45.3	46.9	52.6
30 years	38.1	41.0	42.6	47.8
35 years	33.8	36.7	38.3	43.0
40 years	29.5	32.4	34.0	38.2
45 years	25.2	28.2	29.7	33.4
50 years	21.0	24.1	25.2	28.5
55 years	16.8	19.8	20.9	23.6
60 years	12.6	15.6	16.7	18.7
65 years	8.4	11.4	12.5	14.5
70 years	4.2	7.2	7.4	10.2
75 years	0.4	3.4	3.6	5.6
80 years	0.1	1.1	1.2	2.2

Source: Government Actuary's Department

Tories win Lambeth injunction

Conservative members of the Labour-led Lambeth council, south London, yesterday won an injunction ending their exclusion from council committee meetings (Hugh Clayton writes). But the declaration of interest that led to the Lambeth dispute is likely to be adopted next week by 12 other Labour-led councils and the Inner London Education Authority.

The injunction granted yesterday in a private hearing by Mr Justice Ewbank means that Conservatives in Lambeth can no longer be kept off committees because they will not complete the new forms.

Servicemen were held in 'conditions of oppression'

By Gregory Neale

The eight servicemen acquitted of espionage offences in last year's Cyprus secrets trial were held and questioned in conditions of oppression, the inquiry into their interrogation was told.

Mr Igor Judge, QC, counsel with the inquiry, said that the conditions under which the men were held, detained and questioned, in lengthy and solitary confinement, without legal advice, had in part been due to the military authorities' concern quickly to detect and prevent any threat to national security.

But such arguments of necessity were wrong, Mr Judge said, and he wondered why it had not occurred to the interrogators that "confessions" given under such circumstances could be unreliable.

The eight servicemen were acquitted of espionage charges at the Central Criminal Court last October, after Britain's longest and most costly Official Secrets trial. They told the jury they had made false confessions under the pressure of interrogation.

The conditions the servicemen experienced did constitute oppression, Mr Judge contended, but he emphasized that there was no question of the men's interrogators or their guards having subjected them to torture or physical mistreatment.

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Commentary

Geoffrey Smith

President Reagan's call for sanctions against Libya illustrates one of the fundamental problems of the Atlantic Alliance...

This concept of West European security is challenged by minority sections of opinion in a number of countries...

There is not, however, always the same identity of attitude or of interest outside the Atlantic region...

That is why Britain was so reluctant to impose them against Iran at President Carter's behest...

There are also considerations of commercial self-interest. It would be much more damaging for Britain to break its links with South Africa...

In fact, Mr Reagan has acted with more sensitivity towards the European position than may be readily appreciated on this side of the Atlantic...

While making it clear that he would like European support, he recognized that some European countries may have problems of their own...

It was at that point alone that the American Ambassador, Mr Charles Price, pressed Sir Geoffrey Howe at their meeting on Wednesday...

So Governments on both sides of the Atlantic are taking deliberate care to avoid another Alliance crisis over this boycott...

Unfortunately, this statesmanship on the part of governments does not dispose of the problem. There remains the danger that European public opinion may once again believe that Mr Reagan has been impulsive...

It is, moreover, the kind of danger that is likely to recur more frequently these days because Europe is no longer such a focus of strategic anxiety...

There is no possibility of NATO operating as a worldwide alliance. What is needed, in respect to each side of the Atlantic, for the particular concerns of the other...

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Polaroid's court victory pushes Kodak out of the picture

From Trevor Fishlock, New York

The nine-year battle of giants over the instant photography business ended with defeat for Kodak and victory for the Polaroid company...

Kodak yesterday obeyed a court order and stopped production and marketing of its instant cameras and films...

The ruling at the end of the protracted patent action left millions of Kodak owners with useless cameras.

Kodak assured dealers that they would receive credits for unsold cameras and film...

Defeat for Kodak came with a Supreme Court judge's refusal to allow the company's last-minute appeal to stay in the instant picture business...

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The court victory is significant for Polaroid: about nine-tenths of its business is tied to instant photography...

Kodak had about a quarter of the American instant picture market, a market that has declined since 1978...

Defeat is by no means crippling for Kodak. It is a much larger company and the instant picture market represented only a small proportion of its \$10.6 billion sales in 1984.

But Kodak is concerned about the outcome of another legal battle: Polaroid's claim for damages. Polaroid said yesterday that "every camera Kodak sold injured us"...

With the news of the court decision, Kodak stock fell on the New York exchange by \$1.37 to \$48.63. Polaroid stock was up \$1.25, to \$44.50.

It is not clear what effect the court decision will have on the Japanese Fuji company, which makes an instant camera.

Exchange offers: Owners of Kodak's instant cameras in Britain have been promised generous exchange terms...

Japan, as a free-trader, is doing all it can to help President Reagan defeat the most serious of the 300 protectionist Bills pending in Congress...

Mr Abe is also expected to give Japan's response to American requests for co-operation with sanctions against Libya.

Negotiations began a year ago on the four areas: telecommunications, electronics, pharmaceuticals and forestry products.

Mr Abe will be trying hard to convince Mr George Shultz, the US Secretary of State, that

Spain has made a greater profit out of the opening of the Gibraltar frontier than the colony itself...

The report, copies of which were made available to the Spanish Foreign Ministry, says that exports from Spain to Gibraltar doubled in the first quarter of 1985...

The "significant boom" in tourism means that £20 million has been spent by some two million visitors to the Rock since normalization of relations.

Some of the proposed \$5,000 million, split evenly between US Government and industry, would be spent on a commercial project to demonstrate cleaner methods of burning coal.

At a time of proposed cuts in US Government spending, the recommendation puts Mr Reagan in a difficult position.

He is unwilling to spend the money, but cannot ignore the report, commissioned at the last US-Canadian summit in March...

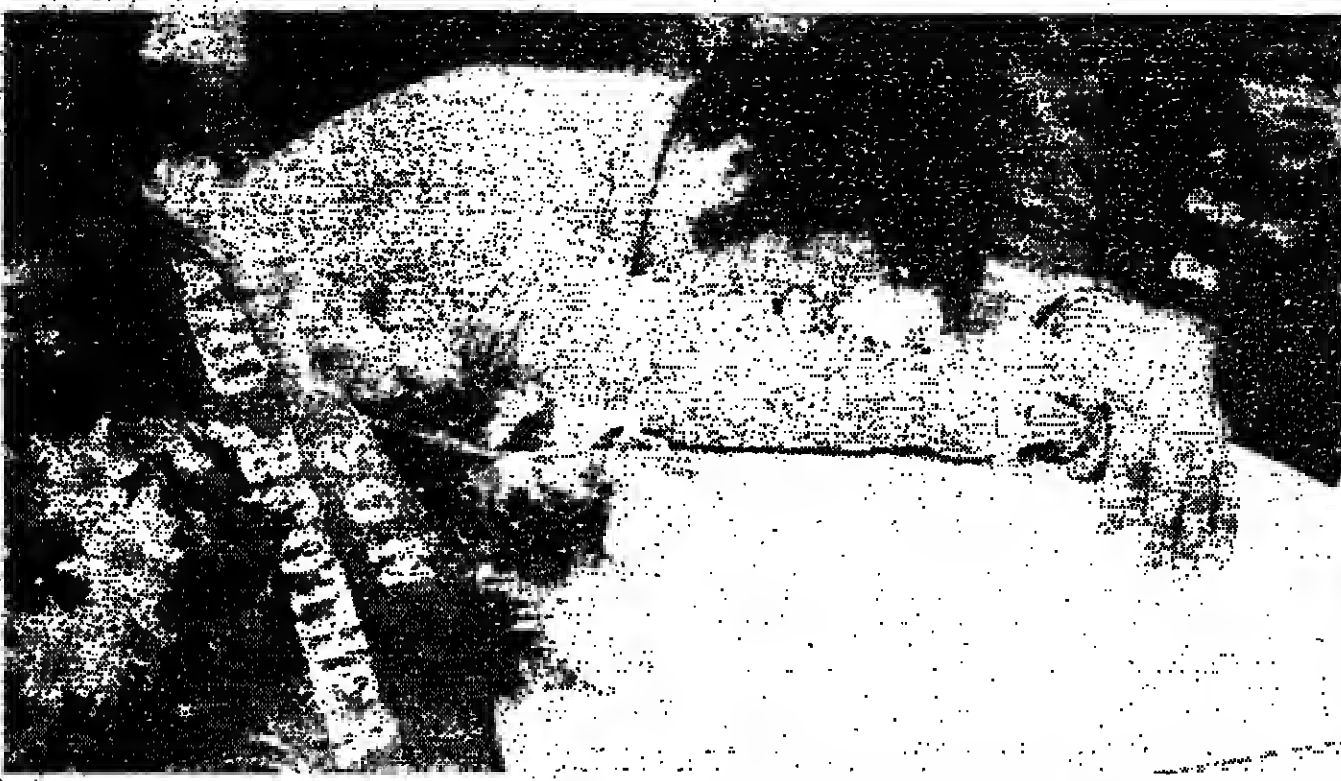
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John Sanchez weeping over the coffin of his half-brother Felipe Garza, aged 15, in California. Felipe, who died last week, had asked his parents for his heart to be given to his girlfriend Donna Ashlock, aged 14. She underwent a transplant operation.

All eyes on Botha to stop economic rot

From Michael Hornsby, Johannesburg

Dr Fritz Leutwiler, the Swiss banker acting as mediator in Pretoria's efforts to reschedule part of its foreign debts...

His visit will begin a testing period for South Africa's once-invincible economy.

All eyes will be on President Botha when he makes the keynote policy statement at the opening of Parliament in Cape Town at the end of this month.

It was Mr Botha's dispiritingly anti-climatic speech to a National Party congress in Durban on August 15, which had been billed as an important

statement of reform but in the event contained little of substance, that sent the rand into a nosedive...

The South African currency has started to show some signs of recovery only in the past few weeks.

This fall has sharply boosted inflation, which is now running at nearly 17 per cent and could go as high as 20 per cent.

A bizarre side-effect has been a speculative boom on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange.

Not surprisingly, the South African proposals, seen as the first shot in prolonged and hard-fought negotiations...

Pretoria responded at the end of August by suspending for four months repayments of principal (interest payments continued) on some \$14,000 million (£9,525 million) of its estimated \$24,000 million of foreign debt.

Last month, when it became clear that agreement on rescheduling these debts was still not in sight...

In addition, through Dr Leutwiler, Pretoria has circulated to about 30 leading creditor banks proposals which, it is understood, would postpone repayments of capital until 1990...

After an estimated drop of 0.5 per cent in 1985, gross domestic product is forecast to grow by three per cent this year.

But with the black population (which accounts for more than 70 per cent of the total population of some 32 million) increasing by at least 2.8 per cent a year...

A black unemployment rate of about 25 per cent. Foreign capital investment, now virtually non-existent, is considered vital to achieve this.

Swiss mediator, page 19

Hong Kong cheered by appeal for stateless

From David Bonavia, Hong Kong

Top Hong Kong legislators were jubilant yesterday after their unanimous decision to press Britain to grant access to the UK for people here who fear they will become stateless after reversion of the territory to Chinese sovereignty in 1997.

Miss Lydia Dunn, the senior unofficial member of the Legislative Council, was widely congratulated on a tough speech she made on behalf of some 6,000 ethnic Indians and other people...

However, unofficial members of the council have put off plans to visit Britain and lobby there before the Commons debate on nationality.

Miss Dunn said after this week's Legislative Council debate: "We consider that these modest requests are the very least the people of Hong Kong can expect to see satisfied after nearly a century and a half of British rule."

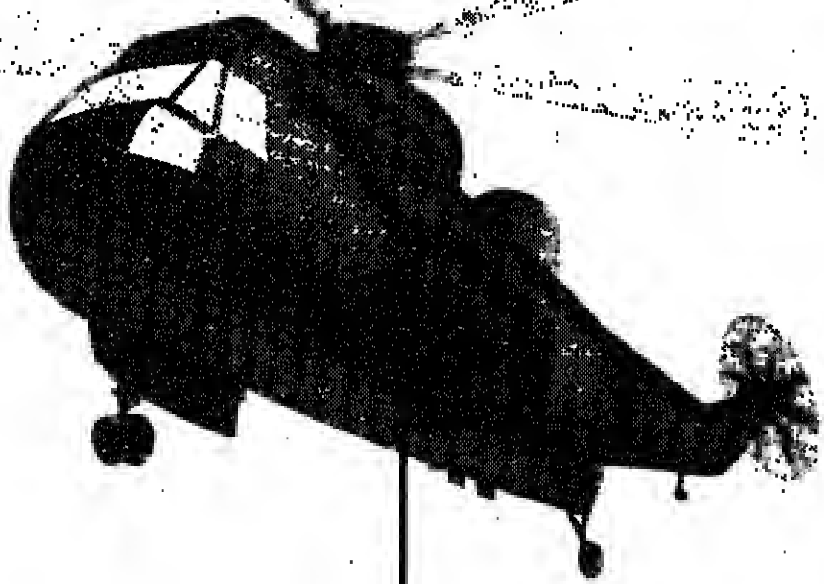
Ethnic Indians holding British Dependent Territory Citizen (BDTC) passports have argued that under the present arrangements their great-grandchildren will be stateless...

More than three million ethnic Chinese in Hong Kong are entitled to BDTC passports, which however do not accord them automatic right of entry or abode in the UK.

The Hong Kong Government proposes to introduce a new passport for "British nationals (overseas)", which would state that the holder had the right of abode in Hong Kong...

Closed door, page 10

Westland announce a helpline for their shareholders.



To have your say, you may either attend Tuesday's meeting in London or get your proxy to the registrars in Bristol by 10.30am Sunday 12th January at the latest.

Here's one further proxy form.

To help you meet the deadline, you can deliver it to us at any of the addresses opposite between 9.00am and 5.00pm Friday or Saturday.

We'll then get it delivered for you.

If you don't get it to us by 5.00pm on Saturday, we won't be able to get it there in time.

National Westminster Bank PLC, New Issues Dept, PO Box 79, 2 Princes St, London EC2P 2BD.

National Westminster Bank PLC, Registrar's Dept, PO Box 82, 37 Broad St, Bristol BS99 7NH.

Westland plc, Winterstoke Road, Weston-super-Mare, Avon BS24 9AB.

Westland plc, Yeovil, Somerset BA20 2YB.

British Hovercraft Corporation, East Cowes, Isle of Wight PO32 6RH.

If you have difficulty in returning your proxy in time you can call 01-583 1398 between 10.00am and 8.00pm Friday or Saturday and we'll do our best to help you.

Don't forget. The Westland Board strongly recommend the partnership with UTC/Fiat.

FOR USE BY WESTLAND SHAREHOLDERS ONLY. Please return the proxy form to The Registrar, Westland plc, National Westminster Bank PLC, Registrar's Department, P.O. Box 82, 37 Broad Street, Bristol BS99 7YA.

Table with columns: RESOLUTIONS, FOR, AGAINST. Rows: Number 1: Ordinary Resolution, Number 2: Special Resolution, Number 3: Special Resolution.

Notes: 1. If you wish to appoint any other person as your proxy, who need not be a Member of the Company, please declare the wish 'The Chairman of the Meeting'...



Paris backs US prepared for a long haul on sanctions to punish Gadaffi

By Our Foreign Staff

France has agreed to seek an urgent EEC meeting to discuss US calls for sanctions against Libya, the Foreign Ministry in Paris said yesterday.

The meeting had been suggested by Italy and Greece. An emergency meeting can be considered only if three EEC states call for one. No date has been suggested.

In London the Foreign Office said it would consider any proposals for a special meeting of EEC foreign ministers to discuss closer co-ordination in the fight against terrorism. Officials said it was up to the Dutch, who now hold the EEC presidency, to call such a meeting.

Meanwhile Canadian officials said they had urged Canadian businesses not to undermine US sanctions against Libya. The Ottawa Government is considering further steps requested by Washington.

In Ankara Mr Turgut Ozal, the Turkish Prime Minister, said Turkey's ties with Tripoli took priority over US calls for sanctions.

"Turkey has long-standing good relations with Libya. Therefore, we view this [call] in this respect," he told reporters.

"Our relations are more on an economic basis and Turkey has long-term ties with Libya. We cannot ignore this."

Egypt, one of Washington's chief Arab allies, said it would not follow the US example and withdraw its workers from neighbouring Libya.

Mr Abdel-Halim Ahn Ghazala, the Defence Minister, in a cautious first official reaction to President Reagan's call, said: "If the United States decides to do that, it is its own business and we have no right to comment."

In Addis Ababa the Organization of African Unity came out in support of Libya but called on both parties to exercise restraint in order to create dialogue.

In Tunis Arab foreign, economy, and finance ministers will meet next Monday for a special session of the Arab League ministerial council to discuss the US measures. The meeting is at Libya's request.

From Christopher Thomas, Washington

The White House, dismayed but undaunted by Western Europe's refusal to join President Reagan's economic boycott of Libya, said yesterday that punishing Colonel Gadaffi, the Libyan leader, for supporting terrorism would be "a long process" and that "we are in for a long haul".

Mr Reagan has launched a diplomatic offensive to persuade friendly European and Arab countries that they are dangerously exposed to Colonel Gadaffi's terrorism and that it is in their interests to impose sanctions. The Administration may send an emissary to Europe to encourage a more sympathetic response to the American position.

Mr Robert Oakley, the Administration's counter-terrorism expert, said yesterday that the US was "not lecturing" friendly countries, but America shared a common concern with Western European and moderate Arab Governments that had been threatened by international terrorism. Among examples, he cited the siege of the Libyan Embassy in London.

Public rift in Bonn

From Frank Johnson, Bonn

The United States and West Germany aired their disagreement over sanctions on Libya yesterday, with conflicting public comments, however courteously phrased by the Chancellor, Herr Helmut Kohl, and the US Ambassador, Mr Richard Burt.

Herr Kohl told a press conference that as Chancellor he must especially consider the 1,500 West Germans living in Libya.

The federal republic, unlike the United States, had no oil wells of its own and relied on Libya for a high proportion of its oil imports, he said "In any case, the amount of credit for export business with Libya has been cut since I took office, from DM10 billion to DM7 billion at the present time."

Herr Kohl said Bonn would take part in any consultations concerning the struggle against terrorism. His government had "unmistakable suspicions" and "a range of evidence" that Libya was responsible for the

Rome and Vienna airport attacks that neither its economic boycott nor its freezing of Libyan assets in the US will have any serious effect on the Libyan economy, but hopes the attitude will help harden the action of friendly governments towards Colonel Gadaffi. Libya has mainly cash in the United States probably no more than £400 million (£280 million).

The Administration acknowledges that neither its economic boycott nor its freezing of Libyan assets in the US will have any serious effect on the Libyan economy, but hopes the attitude will help harden the action of friendly governments towards Colonel Gadaffi.

He said Western Europe was now experiencing terrorism that originated in the Middle East, a development that was going to make it too costly to continue "business as usual" with Libya. Moderate Arab governments, too, were threatened.

He emphasized that the US was offering to work with European and moderate Arab governments. "We will see whether or not the offer is seized. The opportunity is there." There was already some co-operation with moderate Arab countries, "but there are obviously limitations".

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Lihyans protesting in Tripoli over US action against Colonel Gadaffi's regime

Rome curbs arms sales and workers

From John Earle

Rome - Italy is to ban arms sales to Libya and to forbid its citizens from taking jobs left vacant by the withdrawal of expatriate Americans, the Foreign Minister, Signor Giulio Andreotti, said here yesterday.

He made the announcement after a four-hour meeting of the inner cabinet called to discuss a letter from President Reagan to the Prime Minister, Signor Bettino Craxi, urging Italy to impose economic sanctions as a reprisal for Libya's support for Palestinian terrorism.

Italy is not prepared to comply with the US request on its own, but has asked for a meeting of European Community foreign ministers to take a common stand. "We are convinced that it is Europe as a whole which must give a reply to the American position," Signor Andreotti said. He added that initiatives to combat terrorism must also take into account the political problems of the Middle East in general.

Signor Oscar Luigi Scalfaro, the Interior Minister, is to visit Vienna, London, and Paris, urging closer European collaboration and exchanges of information against terrorism.

Mr Burt later met the Foreign Minister, Herr Hans-Dietrich Genscher, the Cabinet's strongest opponent of sanctions.

He declined to comment on the coming visit to southern Africa of the Commonwealth group of eminent persons which is seeking to promote dialogue between Pretoria and representative black leaders towards ending apartheid.

The minister said that as a result of his talks with Mrs Thatcher and other members of her government, there no longer remained any obstacle in the way of normalizing diplomatic relations between London and Lagos. "We are back on track."

Asked whether he would advise President Babangida to upgrade diplomatic relations between Britain and Nigeria to the level of high commissioner, he said: "I will leave you to draw your own conclusions."

The two countries withdrew their high commissioners after the attempt to kidnap Mr Umaru Dikko, a former Nigerian minister, from London in July 1984.

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'Russian coup' series halted

From Trevor Fishlock

New York - An American television network has stopped work on a drama series showing America under the heel of Russian occupiers. The Soviet Government recently criticized the production, including it in a list of films, with *Rambo* and *Rocky IV*, which it said incited anti-russian feelings.

Filming had not started on the television series, which is called *America* and was being made by ABC Entertainment. It is set in the United States 10 years after KGB agents take over the country in a bloodless coup. The script calls for America to be depicted as drab,

with people queuing for food and finding solace in drink and drugs. ABC says it is postponing work on the series. A spokesman at the Soviet Embassy in Washington expressed satisfaction with the decision, saying that "it is a good sign that the spirit of Geneva has been taken into consideration". He said that the idea that Russians would capture the United States was wrong, and that "such a film would not facilitate understanding between our two countries."

ABC indicated that they had been "leaned on" by the Russians. The ABC New Moscow bureau chief had been called to the Foreign Ministry where it was suggested that it would be unfortunate if the relations ABC News had in Moscow diminished.

But even before the Russians expressed concern, the series was in difficulty. The company balked at a proposed \$50 million (\$333 million) budget and ordered the series reduced from 16 to 12 hours, costing \$32 million.

ABC Entertainment said that production, due to start this month, had been postponed for money reasons.

The nature of the series, and the Russians' concern and warning, will be considered when a final decision is made.

Lagos 'back on track' with London

By Nicholas Ashford

Diplomatic Correspondent - Professor Bolaji Akinyemi, Nigeria's Foreign Minister, called yesterday for the imposition of mandatory economic sanctions against South Africa.

Addressing a press conference at the end of a three-day official visit to Britain, he said Nigeria did not want to destroy the South African economy, but he believed "that South Africa will give way before that happens". He urged Britain to think again on its opposition to sanctions.

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Pressure on US TV network

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Outraged smoker puts jet in jeopardy

Atlantic City, New Jersey (Reuter) - A man told not to smoke on a twin-engine plane nearly caused a crash before another passenger bent him unconscious, Southern Jersey Airways said.

During a fight for the controls, the plane nosedived twice, dropping 2,000 ft in the first dive and coming close to crashing in the second.

The passenger who rescued the pilot, who was being hit by the enraged smoker, said he acted "because I thought I was going to die. After eight or nine punches, I knocked him out."

The smoker is being charged with interfering with a flight, which carries a maximum penalty of 20 years' imprisonment.

Cruise delivery

Frankfurt (AP) - The first group of 96 US anti-aircraft cruise missiles has arrived at an American air base in West Germany, according to a radio news broadcast here. It said they were stored at the Hahn base in the Hunsruck area, about 68 miles west of Wiesbaden.

Uganda's need - Kampala (AFP) - Uganda needs at least \$25 million (£18.5 million) to resettle 100,000 people displaced by four years of guerrilla war and an additional 250,000 Ugandans returning from Sudan and Zaïre, a government official said.

Lutheran error - Geneva (AP) - The Lutheran World Federation, citing an "unfortunate calculation error," increased its recently issued world church membership figures by nearly one million. It had left out the Lutherans in West Germany. The revised total was 68,444,845.

New moon - Pasadena, California (Reuter) - Long-range photographs taken by the Voyager 2 spacecraft have shown a tiny, previously unknown moon orbiting the planet Uranus, the US space agency announced. The moon, designated 1983 U1 and estimated at 35 miles in diameter, is the sixth known to orbit Uranus.

Liberia squeeze - Freetown (AFP) - The Liberian Government raised the price of imported rice and appointed agents to ensure that traders did not sell at prices above the official level. The decision was seen as a move to scrap food subsidies in line with IMF demands.

Drugs haul - Delhi (Reuter) - Indian customs officials seized a record amount of drugs worth \$72 million near Bombay. Discovery of 1,329lb of heroin and 4.6 tonnes of hashish hidden under haystacks on a farm was believed the biggest haul ever made in India.

Bleak house - Washington, Pennsylvania (AP) - Joseph Hox, an 89-year-old recluse who had ordered the best cut off to his house, was found frozen to death in a few feet from a box stuffed with nearly \$200,000 in cash, police said here.

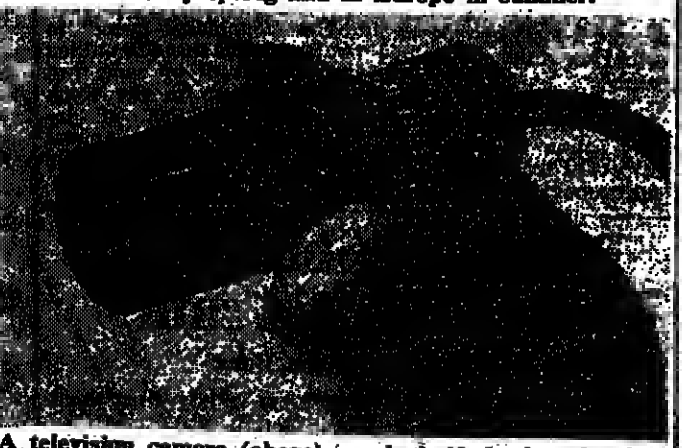
'Spy' hanged - Damascus (AP) - A 25-year-old Syrian sentenced to death by a military tribunal for spying for Israel was hanged in public in a square here, one day after his brother was executed on the same charges.

Skiers killed - Vienna - Three skiers were killed by an avalanche near the Grossglockner mountain in south-west Austria. The men, all Austrians, are believed to have set off the avalanche while searching for a lost key ring.

Gypsy challenge - Heidelberg (Reuter) - West German gypsies will now claim for compensation against the giant Trich concerning its decision to pay £2 million to Jewish groups for slave labour during the Nazi period; a gypsy spokesman said.



The world's smallest video camera (above) has been launched by JVC in Japan. The camera, weighing only 1.3 kg, will sell for about \$1,220 (£800) and will be available in the US by spring and in Europe in summer.



A television camera (above) nearly half the length of a king-size cigarette has been unveiled by Toshiba in Tokyo.

CLOSING DOWN
URGENT AUCTION
of authenticated handmade
Persian & Oriental
carpets, rugs and runners

In a resolution of company directors to close down, and voluntarily surrender all stock by auction, and to accept from the market due to financial difficulties, and together with heavy financial loss in several lines.

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Long and vicious battle looms over French Bill on work hours

From Diana Geddes, Paris

By special decree of President Mitterrand, the outgoing French Parliament, which was supposed to have wound up its business at Christmas in preparation for the lead-up to the general election on March 16, was re-opened in an extraordinary session yesterday to debate the Government's hotly-contested Bill on flexible working hours.

The Bill, which is opposed by employers and unions, would break the present rigid mould of the 39-hour working week. It would allow management to require employees to work up to 41 hours a week, without overtime pay, provided the average working week over the year did not exceed 38 hours, or up to 44 hours a week, provided the average working week did not exceed 37½ hours.

The moderate Force Ouvrière union organization has condemned the Bill as "dangerous" and likely to lead to anarchy. The Communist-led CGT union says it will destroy fundamental union rights, leading to wage cuts and an increase in unemployment, and an increase in the powers of the employers. The CGT has vowed to fight the Bill tooth and nail.

Of the three main union organizations, only the Socialist CPDT has approved the proposed measures. It agrees with the Government that greater flexibility in work conditions is necessary to modernize French industry and therefore is an essential weapon in the fight against unemployment.

The main employers association, the CNPF, dislikes the Bill on the ground that it does not go far enough. It wants "real flexibility" including the freedom to lay off workers without the need for prior government permission; fewer restrictions in the conditions attached to employing new workers.

Some were surprised that the Government decided to revive what is likely to be a long and vicious battle so soon before the elections. But the alternative was to be accused of weakness in the face of the onslaught by its erstwhile colleagues, the Communists, which would have been disastrous for the Government's image.

The Bill, first presented to Parliament last November, has passed its first reading in the National Assembly and now comes before the Senate. However, the Communists have tabled more than 300 amendments and the right-wing majority in the Senate also plans to propose radical changes. The Bill, therefore, may yet be lost because of lack of time.



"Tell me, beautiful right, why do you have such big teeth?" says the latest Socialist election poster to appear in Paris, depicting the right-wing Opposition as a wolf.

Aid delays said to put 4m at risk

By Paul Valley and Gill Lusk

Oxfam and the Save the Children Fund have made a joint appeal for action by the British Government over the continuing famine in the west of Sudan, where food aid will run out in the next two weeks.

The lives of some four million people in the western provinces of Darfour and Kordofan are being put needlessly at risk because of delays in the international aid pipeline, according to Mr Nick Winer, Oxfam's recently returned field director in Sudan.

The agencies have made their joint appeal for food aid and cash to provide transport within Sudan to Mr Timothy Raison, Minister for Overseas Development. They have made similar appeals to the United States Government, the EEC and the United Nations.

Action was not immediate all the advances of last year would be lost, Mr Winer said.

Band Aid has decided to divert \$3 million (£2.1 million) earmarked for long-term development into immediate relief work.

Farmers shed few tears as agriculture secretary quits

From Our Own Correspondent Washington

The American farm belt had few words of regret yesterday over the abrupt resignation of Mr John Block, the financially troubled hog farmer who, as Agriculture Secretary, has presided over the worst farm crisis since the Great Depression.

His own money worries on his 2,500-acre hog and grain operation near Knoxville, Illinois, continually provided an embarrassing confirmation that American family farmers have fared miserably under the Reagan Administration's austerity programmes.

"My objective was to carry the mail for the President," he said. In so doing, he was vilified by fellow farmers.

President Reagan, who is looking for a working farmer to succeed Mr Block in what must be the most thankless Cabinet post, said at his press conference on Tuesday that the farm crisis had "bottomed out", although it would take a little patience before farmers began to recover significantly.

Mr Block, who has held the job for five years, plans to leave next month but will not return

to the day-to-day running of his farm, which is managed by his son, Hans, aged 26, who knew nothing about his father's resignation until he heard it on the radio.

The day before the announcement on Tuesday, Mr Block appeared on CBS television to say he was not planning to quit. He was obviously embarrassed at the untruth when he announced his departure, and by way of explanation said merely that it was time to go now he had steered the new Farm Bill into law.

That Bill, signed last month by President Reagan, trimmed



Mr Block: Hog farmer with worries

several farm support measures but fell far short of the swingeing cuts the White House had sought from Congress.

It was the first time since Roosevelt's "New Deal" that any government had attempted a significant step towards achieving free-market agriculture. Even so, commodity price supports will cost a record \$54 billion (£37 billion) over the next three years, a sure sign that the White House and Congress remain significantly at odds on the extent to which American farmers should be helped.

Farmers have been going bankrupt at record rates because of a combination of falling land prices, high interest rates and low commodity prices. Although most farmers are Republicans, Democrats have made important inroads into the farm vote and hope to capitalize on the crisis in November's mid-term elections.

Mr Block, whose eternal optimism about the state of farming infuriated the farm belt, insisted with a smile that "we have set the stage for real recovery". As for his future, he was considering some "exciting possibilities".

Post chief's sacking may lead to US revamp

From Christopher Thomas Washington

The summary and unprecedented sacking this week of Mr Paul Carlin, America's Postmaster-General, after only a year in the job has cleared the way for a sweeping management purge, swinging cost-cutting measures and - the White House hopes - the eventual total handover of the monopoly business to private industry.

Mr Carlin was fired by the US Postal Service's board of governors amid accusations that he moved too slowly to reduce the bloated headquarters staff in Washington and failed to master key details of his job. It was a humiliating public departure for a largely unknown insider who spent a lifetime climbing through the postal bureaucracy.

The postal service board, once a toothless body, has become extremely aggressive since President Reagan began appointing conservative, business-minded members. It clearly felt that Mr Carlin had failed to improve the postal service's dismal reputation for late and lost mail. In particular, it has privately criticized his choice of computers for automatic sorting.

The new Postmaster-General is Mr Albert Casey, aged 66, a Harvard-trained businessman with a string of executive successes behind him. He is best known for turning American Airlines from a moribund company into a lean and efficient profit-maker.

The postal service moved from a department of the federal Government to a quasi-private corporation in 1971. The appointment of a conservative outsider signals the Government's determination to run the service strictly as a business. In the year up to September 30 last year, the service lost \$250 million, despite a series of cost-cutting exercises, including salary reductions. This year, it is now probably running at a profit.

A well-connected trade newsletter, *Business Mailer's Review*, said as long ago as March that the Government was unhappy with Mr Carlin's performance and the continued low quality of delivery standards. Last month the publication reported that the postal governors were unhappy with Mr Carlin for refusing to go along with plans for massive lay-offs. Indeed, the workforce rose from 702,000 to 740,000 during his tenure.

Tehran gets tough with draft dodgers

Tehran (Reuters) - The Iranian Parliament voted to stiffen conditions of national service, approving a Bill that all drafted soldiers should spend one year in operational zones on the Gulf war front or in north-west Kurdistan.

Speakers said they wanted the amendments to prevent people from using influence to get soft postings for relatives in Tehran or provincial cities and to make life more difficult for draft-dodgers.

The draft board chief said that after a three-month grace period men who failed to register would have to serve three to six months extra in the armed forces after being caught.

Swiss order out Czech envoy

Berne (Reuters) - Switzerland has ordered expulsion of a Czechoslovak diplomat because it says, he collected information on his compatriots living in that country, the public prosecutor's office said.

The office said the man abused his post to study methods of escape from Czechoslovakia used by emigrants and the personal, family and business connections of Czechoslovaks.

City hall riot

Sao Luis, Brazil (AFP) - Thousands of dismissed municipal employees stoned and burnt the city hall in this provincial capital in the state of Maranhão after the oew woman mayor carried out a campaign promise by sacking 14,500 people.

Walking taller

Tokyo (Reuters) - Japanese are getting taller, with most of the growth in their legs, the Education Ministry reported. A survey showed that 17-year-old boys were 2 inches taller than their counterparts of 25 years ago, and girls 1.5 inches taller.

Peru switch

Lima (AFP) - Señor Remigio Morales Bermúdez, son of Peru's last military President, was named Minister for Food and Agriculture when Señor Mario Barturn resigned after being attacked for shortages and high prices. Señor Barturn blamed government-imposed prices which did not cover production costs.

Head of Dhaka University quits over campus clash

From Ahmed Fazi, Dhaka

The chief of Dhaka University resigned yesterday as campus tension mounted in the wake of armed clashes on Wednesday between student groups for and against the Government.

Professor Shamsul Huq, Vice-Chancellor of the university, told reporters he had submitted his resignation to President Ershad because of his inability to run the campus plagued by student unrest since August 1985 when it re-opened after six months of forced closure.

"I cannot run the university if students brandish arms on the campus," Professor Huq said.

University officials said students were leaving residential hostels on the campus yesterday fearing fresh outbreaks of violence.

At least 100 students were wounded on Wednesday as supporters of the pro-Ershad New Bangla Students Society clashed with members of the rival Central Students Action Committee which leads an alliance of 14 opposition student groups. Guns, bombs and iron rods were used.

Eyewitnesses said shots were fired in the air and bombs exploded in the central arts faculty building as most students fled in panic.

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WE BELIEVE SENSORS ARE THE LINK BETWEEN HUMAN NEEDS AND TECHNOLOGY



Green, clean and fighting on

Ralph Nader, veteran American campaigner for the small man's rights, will be in Britain next week with a new target - reform of the 75-year-old Official Secrets Act

He has been called a saint, a prophet, the conscience of America. For 20 years he has fought the industrial titans, challenged the corporate giants almost single-handedly from a dingy, cluttered office in the fashionable part of Washington.

Armed only with a searing zeal and the dedication of a crusading social critic, he has triumphed beyond any of his disciples' dreams. Ralph Nader, the ascetic, uncompromising idealist, has wrought a quiet revolution. American capitalism will never be the same.

Like most prophets, he is taken for granted and almost forgotten in his own country. In the past two decades dozens of environmental and consumer protection laws have been passed, with legislation on car safety, clean air, clean water and freedom of information. It comes as a surprise to many to find that Nader, the folk hero of the protest generation of the 1960s and '70s, is still around, still campaigning.

He is 51 now and a little grey at the temples, but no mellow. Years of struggle against big business and government have kept him lean and combative. Nader, always reluctant to acknowledge his own success in establishing the principles of consumer protection, regulations enforcing social responsibility on big corporations and the rights of the ordinary citizen, had identified new abuses, taken aim at new targets: energy costs, tax reform, access to the airways, health care.

His vision is of a society controlling its own resources

New citizen and consumer groups have been founded, and "Nader's raiders", the hundreds of student disciples who poked their noses into every aspect of business and government in the 1960s, have taken their causes into the heartland, the boardroom and even overseas.

Next Tuesday Nader will be taking part in a rally in London marking the 75th anniversary of the Official Secrets Act. He will join speakers including Roy Hattersley, MP, David Steel, MP, Clive Ponting and Sarah Tisdall (both prosecuted under the Act) who want to see the law reformed.

But he has got a bigger fight back home. Government intervention there is out of fashion and Nader is now battling to preserve his earlier successes and fight the Reagan administration's attempts to soften the interpretation of regulatory laws, many of which are being denounced as burdensome and bureaucratic. "Reagan's changes in enforcing the rules are a total disgrace - often criminal", he said.



Giving people the power and confidence to sue has long been a prime goal of his movement

distant, impersonal figure to retain his integrity. He never accepts hospitality, never falls for the frivolities of the jet-set, never calls senators by their first name. "I did once, with a senator from Michigan, and when it came to lay it on him, I had to think twice. I had been to dinner at his home. But I resolved it - I went ahead and criticized him publicly - roasted him, actually."

Remaining at arm's length, like an attorney, Nader has an invincible belief in the power of the law. The courts have always been his preferred forum of redress. Giving people the power and confidence to sue has long been a prime goal of his movement. And for a man who has savoured his greatest victories in the courtroom, he is peculiarly loath to criticize America's incessant litigation, its fixation with lawsuits.

Naturally, he denounces corrupt lawyers, the sharks who sue in the hope of getting half the award. But he disputes the claims that malpractice suits are driving doctors out of business, that insurance costs are rocketing because of absurd damages awards.

Nader believes that his opponents conspire to change public opinion and make it more difficult for the "victim class" to sue. In many ways, America has adjusted to Nader. There are now consumer watchdogs in every State legislature, consumer affairs departments in every big business. Nader concedes that some of his early demands have been institutionalized, but insists that changes have come not from corporate altruism but from the naked threat of boycotts, adverse publicity and lawsuits.

The times may be out of joint for him politically, as Reagan's America has tired of self-flagellation, of searching its conscience. But Nader has not changed or adapted to the more optimistic, self-indulgent mood around him. He fights on, anxious only to generate enough publicity to keep up the momentum, rekindle the cause in the hearthland. He is one of America's best known names overseas. Britain will soon find he is not one of its most accommodating visitors.

Michael Binyon

Nader's crusade was sparked when as a young Harvard lawyer he denounced General Motors and the corporation responded with a squalid attempt to smear him. His book, *Unsafe at Any Speed*, was a devastating indictment of the American car industry and its attempts to cover up safety defects. It was based on the case of a woman whose arm was severed when her Corvair flipped over as she was driving at 35mph. It led to a showdown with General Motors, to Senate hearings, to the eventual scrapping of the model and to federal traffic safety legislation.

The car industry fought tooth and nail against federal safety standards. Henry Ford trumpeted they would "close down the auto industry" and said Nader might be able to write books but knew nothing about engineering safety in automobiles. But the resulting law has sparked the recall of more than 100 million defective vehicles since 1966 and Nader claims over 150,000 lives have been saved.

Car safety remains one of his many obsessions. He is still fighting for mandatory air-bags and for tougher

pollution standards. He does not own a car; the irony of his passion is its selflessness.

Nader, the exemplary public citizen, is the antithesis of the American consumer. An abstemious bachelor, he has few personal possessions. He still lives in rented rooms and wears the same unfashionable suit and thick army socks he bought in a batch years ago.

Now he is battling to preserve his earlier successes

Shunning the celebrity circuit, he gives away most of the money he earns from books and lectures and lives in moonish poverty. He forces the same shoe-string conditions on his helpers: "They wouldn't have the fire in their bellies if you paid them a conventional salary."

Nader's ultimate vision is of a society controlling its own resources. Consumers must band together for economic self-determination and resist the growth of the corporate

state. Government must be kept honest by constant vigilance. In many ways Nader is the prototype American "Green".

Small is beautiful, for him. He wants little less than the reordering of American economic life with the revival of co-operative institutions of all kinds: food stores, energy concerns, communications, home repair centres.

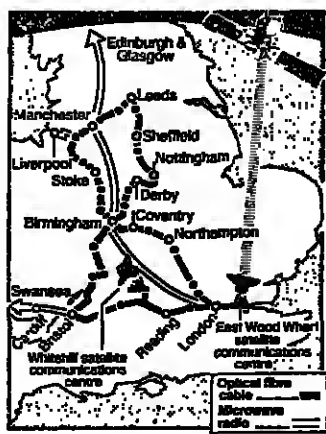
He is campaigning for state-backed citizen utility boards to keep down the cost of electricity and gas. He wants to break the monopoly of the television networks, the power of the insurance companies, the imperialism of multi-national corporation.

It is a left-wing, somewhat anarchic, ideology. Like that of the West German Greens (whom he admires), there is little room for fun or human folly, for economic growth or entrepreneurial free-wheeling. But in person a human warmth and humour comes through his somewhat joyless vision. When asked to define himself, he always replies: "Full-time citizen, the most important office in America."

But Nader has had to remain a

Ring in the changes as the switchboard battle begins

By early summer telephone users in Britain will have a choice of systems. But will the average caller really benefit?



Mercury's microwave and landlines linking main towns

A new era of competition in telecommunications is about to dawn. Mercury Communications, the Cable and Wireless subsidiary licensed by the Government to challenge British Telecom's monopoly, takes delivery next month of four Northern Telecom main digital exchanges. The network it is constructing will be in a position to go live by the early summer when, for the first time in Britain, there will be an alternative telephone operator.

The effect of competition on tariffs will be far reaching. Most long-distance calls will get cheaper but the cost of local calls in many areas will rise sharply as will the cost of renting a domestic line.

Big businesses such as the major banks with extremely large telephone bills will be the main beneficiaries. The losers will be domestic telephone users who do not make many long-distance calls.

Mercury is laying more than 1,000 kilometres of optical fibre cable in concrete ducts along the side of railway lines, allowing customers to link up to a figure-eight network connecting Birmingham with London, Bristol, Leeds and Manchester. There will also be microwave radio links to other business centres.

At the same time the company is building a series of local telephone networks. In the City, Mercury is using London's intricate network of underground ducts, including the 184-mile pipe distribution system

built by the London Hydraulic Power Company in the 1870s, to provide the capital with an advanced all-digital fibre-optic communications network.

Mercury is also building a local network in Glasgow, in conjunction with Clyde TV, the local cable TV station chaired by Sir Monty Finniston, and a similar project is being considered for Manchester. Microwave radio will initially provide local connection in other cities.

These developments would not of themselves be enough to make significant competition to British Telecom possible. That has required a detailed and wide ranging ruling from Professor Bryan Carsberg, the Government's official telecommunications watchdog, which effectively allows Mercury unlimited access to British Telecom's local, national and international networks for routing its calls.

It has yet to be seen how the "interconnect determination" will work in practice but generally it is considered to be extremely favourable to Mercury. It was certainly bitterly fought by British Telecom.

"Interconnect" forces British Telecom to carry Mercury customer calls on parts of its network, allowing Mercury to deal with the long-distance part

of the call and forcing British Telecom to make most of the local connections at each end.

To have duplicated the whole of the British Telecom network of more than 20 million lines would not only have been uneconomic but also impossible to achieve quickly. Professor Carsberg judged that to give Mercury a fighting chance of service may be damaged. Even so, Mr Owen expects to be able to offer his service to ordinary domestic telephone users by the end of next year.

An ordinary British Telecom phone could not at present be connected to the Mercury network because the companies use different technologies. But a combined phone which will be able to address both systems will be available soon. Mr Owen calculates that for all those whose trunk calls normally cost more than £60 a year it will be

worth buying such a phone and becoming a Mercury customer.

For those of us who use a phone mainly for local calls, however, there are few advantages in the new competitive environment. Indeed British Telecom has said that in order to meet price competition from Mercury on long-distance calls, it will be raising its domestic rental and local call charges much more rapidly than it would have done.

Professor Carsberg has been firing off some strongly worded warnings to British Telecom on the way it is going about this "rebalancing" process yet the fact remains that there is little in the newly privatized corporation's license, or in the voluntary undertakings it has given, to prevent a very rapid rise in telephone rental and local call charges.

Mercury is already offering "leased lines" to customers allowing big businesses direct connection between their offices around Britain and internationally. An example of this is the line Mercury leases to the TSB for providing a high-speed digital link between its computer centres in Milton Keynes and Wythenshawe.

The first dialled calls allowing Mercury customers to connect to the new network through British Telecom lines will begin in May. Mercury technicians will initially adapt company PABXs (small private telephone exchanges) enabling the operator to press a button and have the call routed via Mercury rather than British Telecom.

More advanced exchanges

Keeping a watchful eye on local crime

The crackdown on crime launched this week at a Downing Street seminar has produced plans for a new British standard to beat car thefts and insurance incentives to deter burglaries. This report tells how being good neighbours can also play its part

Last spring we started a Neighbourhood Watch scheme in our street in Battersea, south-west London, because crime in the area was getting so bad we felt we didn't have a choice.

The grim cycle of burglaries, car break-ins, thefts and muggings seemed to be quickening. And so much happened in broad daylight, like the time our vehicle was "hoop" on a quiet street, but apparently no one saw anything.

Distracted by having to unload six boisterous kids, my wife left her handbag on the back seat and locked the car. She returned to the car only minutes later but a side window had been shattered and the bag had gone. Ours isn't a particularly quiet street, but apparently no one saw anything.

Although obviously interested in the Neighbourhood Watch literature given to us made sense, with ordinary citizens lending an eye and ear to the police. But to be effective, Watches must break through two giant British social barriers - apathy and reserve. We are just not nosy enough.

At first there was a tussle for the worse under our Watch. A young girl three doors down from us was mugged by two men yards from her gate. It was another daylight attack, and so casual that one of the robbers, having walked off, turned and strolled back to where the terrified girl had fallen to make sure nothing else had fallen from her bag.

People were in the street at the time and cars were going up and down, but no one came to her help. It was possible they didn't realize what was happening. Depressing news, which we hammered home in a newsletter: Shout if someone is attacking; shout "I'm being robbed" so people will know you're not skylarking.

Then a dramatic breakthrough. One of our assistant co-ordinators saw two youths walking up our street, trying door handles on cars and peering inside. He rushed indoors for his Polaroid camera and snapped the culprits in action. The police were called (remember dial 999) and not the local station if you see a crime committed) and the youths were promptly caught.

Our home beat officer, PC Charles Bailey, arrived with some alarming statistics. The month the youths were caught there had been 51 motor vehicle crimes in our zone, a 25 per cent increase on the previous month's figure. Twelve new or newish cars had been stolen.

"But you mustn't get disheartened", he reassured us. "Burglaries, on the other hand, are on the way down".

PC Bailey always urges us to let the police know if we think anything is wrong: "It doesn't matter how many times you call, you're not troubling us."

The police tell us to be vigilant but not vigilant. "We do not want the formation of any citizens' street patrols," said Supt Brian Turner, the crime prevention officer in charge of London's Neighbourhood Watch schemes.

"We are painfully aware of how Watches can get into the wrong hands. We are monitoring the situation carefully."

Although there are now more than 7,000 Watch systems in England, Scotland and Wales, there are none in Ulster. "Communication between police and the public is a delicate business with the atmosphere as it is in the province," said a spokesman for the RUC.

"If we set up Neighbourhood Watches, the paramilitaries would almost certainly take them over. Instead, we have an answerphone system where people can report local crime under a cloak of anonymity."

Supt Turner was one of several senior British policemen to visit the United States to look at long-established community policing plans before British pilot schemes were set up in the spring of 1983.

He was impressed with what he saw in Seattle, where they have a system called Block Watch, with 13 fully-employed civilians working in liaison with the police. They only have half a million people in Seattle, too. In London we have seven million. It's a scheme like Block Watch but just don't have the resources."

The effectiveness of Neighbourhood Watch in Britain is open to debate. Whereas statistics show an overall picture of gloom, with spiralling crime against person and property, Home Office figures recently published show that in Avon and Somerset, areas where Watch schemes were first launched, crime has fallen by 22 per cent.

But there is still resistance. A friend of mine, a university lecturer, lives in another high-crime area of south London and has been burgled three times in as many months. But he says: "Neighbourhood Watch doesn't work. It's a panacea devised by the police to calm the middle classes because they can do nothing about the crime problem."

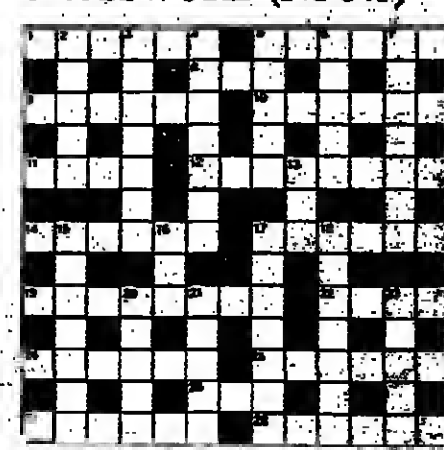
Since our Watch started, we might not have made dramatic inroads on the crime figures, but some of that old British reserve has been melted away and we know each other better. We have also been able to reassure one or two old people who have been living in a state of semi-siege - the bombardment of bad news from the media convincing them that they'll get mugged as soon as they step outside their doors."

Chris Greenwood

CONCISE CROSSWORD (No 845)

- ACROSS
1 Beat soundly (6)
5 Spread untidily (6)
8 Split (3)
9 Dinner jacket (6)
10 Stretch (6)
11 Tableland (4)
12 Graze (8)
14 Hawk (6)
17 Shot piece (6)
19 Session (3,2,3)
22 Nub (4)
24 Dirty (6)
25 Died down (6)
26 Young flower (3)
27 Repeat (6)
28 Tribal leaders (6)

- DOWN
2 Sharp (5)
3 Down wind (7)
4 Having contempt (7)
5 Asparagus piece (5)
6 Local taxes (5)
7 Charming (7)



- 13 Dread (3)
14 Escape (7)
15 Untruth (3)
16 Permeate (7)
18 Straggler (7)
19 As well (6)
21 Perhaps (5)
23 Guide (5)

SOLUTION TO No 844
ACROSS: 8 Belles lettres 9 Eve 10 Dramatic 11 Total 13 16 Great 16 Chimer 19 Usury 22 Last-ditch 24 Lee 25 Chronological
DOWN: 1 Absurd 2 Client 3 Pendulum 4 Pliant 5 Stone 6 Cruise 7 Ascent 12 Owl 14 Roughage 15 Nor 16 Calico 17 Absurd 18 Rattle 20 Unluck 21 Yearly 23 Dank

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FRIDAY PAGE

Under the influence of heavy metal

Interior designer Eva Jiricna's use of industrial materials like rubber, plastic, glass and black steel is transforming the style of our homes and furniture



Hi-tech interior: Eva Jiricna's futuristic styling at the flat of fashion designer Joseph Ettedgui and (right) the artist herself

One enters a very ugly block of flats in Hampstead. Built in 1922, it exudes all the gloom of the worst sort of design - the uninviting staircases, the sad corridors. Then you are let into one particular flat and your brain is forced into a complex series of double takes.

You are in a tiny hall. It is quite dark but there are vivid, yellows and greens glaring at you from carefully-judged pools of light. One wall consists entirely of mirrors, the other is covered with bright green, studded rubber floor tiles. On the floor itself is a plastic mesh which raises you about half an inch above some green vinyl.

At the end of the hall there is a microwave cooker. Two sliding doors suggest possible exits - both are black and both have port-hole windows.

Everything in the kitchen and bathroom is covered in the green rubber. In the first living room there are more mirrors and a sitting area which can be isolated with vertical blinds. There is a lifebelt on the wall and a set of the kind of inflatable floats which children use in swimming pools.

And so it goes on. For this is the home of Eva Jiricna who has now established herself as unquestionably the most influential interior designer in this country. It was she, for example, who first thought of using industrial studded rubber in the home and now they sell it in Habitat. Her shop designs for Joseph Ettedgui (known to everybody as Joseph) have changed every high street.

Recently she has transformed the Way In department at Harrods from an amiable mess into a slick black and grey fantasy - a new Jiricna-designed restaurant owned by her faithful patron Joseph is to be open at the end of this month and she is even converting a flat in Wandsworth for the Thompson Twins.

Finally she was responsible for most of the interior of Richard Rogers's new Lloyd's building in the City of London - although a sudden outbreak of philistinism in the committee meant her designs for the top two floors were rejected.

Eva Jiricna is, you might say, the flavour of the month. But at the personal level it is an acquired taste. She was born in Czechoslovakia in 1939, the daughter of an architect. She intended to study chemistry but changed at the last minute to architecture. At a convention in 1967 she met an architect from the Greater London Council who offered her a job. It took a year for her to obtain the necessary permission from the authorities and she finally arrived on August 1, 1968.

Three weeks later the Russians invaded. She was cut off from her family. Going back was out of the question - people were being asked to sign documents saying they approved of the invasion and, in any case, Czechs abroad for whatever reason were being made to feel like traitors.

But after a year there were still no signs of a thaw. In addition she had grown bored at the GLC so she wrote to every architectural firm which had advertised for staff in one trade magazine.

She ended up with the bizarre task of building the Brighton Marina for the firm of Louis de Soissons. "It was great experience. I wanted to work with water - we had no sea in Czechoslovakia - and there we were constructing huge breakwaters and pouring tons of concrete into the sea." The job lasted almost ten years.

"I started looking for something to do on my own. Then I met Joseph at a party to celebrate the opening of the shop Norman Foster had designed for him. He asked me to do the small Kenzo shop in Sloane Street. I still don't know why. He had very little confidence in me and I was terrified - I was crazy to go from Brighton Marina to this little shop."

In the event it worked brilliantly and she went on to design Joseph's flat. Something about the style caught on -



The flat was featured in just about every architectural magazine and she was a hit - the domestic version of Richard Rogers and Norman Foster. "I don't know what it was about the style. I suppose it looked a bit unusual with all the industrial materials. I've never used wallpaper in my life and I just don't like decorating. I try and look at interiors objectively - I don't start out thinking I have to use wallpaper like a lot of designers do."

The point was that she stuck to what she knew - industrial materials and processes. As a result she seemed to be inventing interior design from scratch. For the doors in Joseph's flat, for example, she wanted to use Glass Reinforced Plastic, an industrial material that makes no sense in the home because of the cost of making moulds. But she couldn't stand the sight of any of the sliding doors on offer so she made her own moulds out of glass and timber and produced the doors within her own price limit.

Such explanations flow from her in the busy monotone. She constantly stresses the logical and functional nature of her decisions, making them sound inevitable, obvious. Her description of how she designed the room we are sitting in is a masterpiece of her understated style.

"I wanted this drawing board as large as possible because that is the most enjoyable part of one's life - working at the drawing board and listening to the radio or watching television", she indicates the Soey which is disdainfully watching us from the end of a black steel bracket.

"Then I had to have storage in here. On a plan you immediately see that the right amount of storage would fill the whole room. So you raise the bed over the storage chest. Then you have to get up to your bed. A ladder would get in the way - so you climb this little space here up these metal boxes. These can be taken out and used as stools."

"Then you have to have a shelf for the TV, for books and so on and so on. I

use perforated metal so I can see what is on the shelves. I wanted the cheapest material so I bought second-hand Dexin and had it painted black. For my shelves I use these metal cable trays.

"I think there is a moral obligation to use all new materials - if there is a good reason for using them - in the best possible way. It's the same with concrete - it's a fantastic material from a construction point of view but it has to be civilized for people to feel comfortable with it."

For most people, of course, their homes just sort of happen with whatever is most convenient at hand. But, even so, they will have begun to feel the Jiricna influence whether in the form of a filtration with studded rubber for the kitchen or, perhaps, a daring metal shelving unit. The matter of cheapness and availability will remain relative - she got her green studded rubber, for example, for only £2 a square instead of £16 because it was left over from Norman Foster's Willis Faber building in Ipswich.

But the real point is that Jiricna is more than just the kind of fashionable designer to be found dotted about the glossy magazines. She has invented and perfected a whole new approach based on an encyclopaedic knowledge of materials, a relentlessly methodical approach to every problem and an exceptional eye for detail. Her quality control is formidable - if the tiniest line of welding is visible on a shelving unit it is sent back at once. So an awful lot is sent back - but that is probably just the penalty for always making it new, for insisting on being modern at whatever cost.

"That is the biggest problem", she sighs, "getting people to do what you want..."

Bryan Appleyard

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MEDICAL BRIEFING

Early warning for cancer?

Cervical cancer experts now believe, contrary to a current practice, that any woman who has an abnormal cervical smear should be thoroughly investigated as soon as possible.

An abnormal smear does not necessarily mean that cancer is present. More often than not it is simply an early warning that cells on the surface of the cervix have changed. In 20 to 30 per cent of cases there is a chance of progression to cancer, however.

In the UK if a woman's abnormal smear shows only signs of early pre-malignant change (known to doctors as CIN I or mild dyskaryosis) or of inflammatory changes, she will usually be asked to come back for another check in three to six months time. This is because it is widely believed that many of these early lesions will revert to normal spontaneously.

A growing body of evidence now suggests that this policy could put women at unnecessary risk. The lowest call for a thorough investigation of all abnormal smears has come from Mr Albert Singer, Consultant Obstetrician and Gynaecologist to the Whittington and Royal Northern Hospitals in London, and his colleagues.

"There are several things which most worry us", Mr Singer said. "We are now able to show that many women with mildly abnormal smears in fact have more serious diseases. In the British Medical Journal 18 months ago we reported that in a third have a severe pre-cancerous stage and in a very few cases even have cancer."

"There have also been a number of papers

published by other workers which show that a quarter to a third of the so-called inflammatory smears have underlying pre-cancer.

"We are seeing more and more women in whom there has been a history of persistent abnormality, or indeed symptoms of cancer, which have been neglected."

Mr Singer adds that there is growing evidence that the genital wart virus, human papilloma virus (HPV) is responsible for cervical cancer.

In a paper just published in the British Journal of Obstetrics and Gynaecology Mr Singer and his colleagues demonstrated that the type of wart virus thought to be most malignant, HPV-type 16, was present in 55 per cent of mildly pre-cancerous lesions. It was present in 90 per cent of cancers.

Mr Singer says that new work is backing this evidence: "There are now in progress studies which are showing that mild abnormalities tend to progress to more serious disease. As well as that we are showing that the DNA configuration in these mild lesions strongly resembles cancer."

"We are now at a point when we can say that anyone who has an abnormal smear should have the cervix examined by colposcopy, a simple investigation which involves looking at the cervix through a microscope. It will show any abnormal tissue at the neck of the womb and this can be immediately and painlessly sampled. Nine out of ten women with pre-cancer can now be successfully treated with the laser or other methods as 'cautery'."

Striking a cord for slimmers

A new study has suggested that simply tying a fixed-length nylon cord around the waist could help a lot more once-fat people stay thin.

Dr John Garrow of the Medical Research Council's clinical research centre at Northwick Park, north-west London, has pioneered the use of such a cord. In his latest, still unpublished, study nearly 40 patients had the chance to use the cord for at least a year (the average time was three years). Fifty per cent managed to keep their weight down and many of those who stopped using the cord did so for reasons other than weight gain such as pregnancy or an operation.

As Dr Garrow explained, people who have been fat often need an artificial indicator of weight gain if they are to keep their weight under control.

"For someone who has never been more than 11 or 12 stone, 13 stone is a big difference, but for someone who was once 20 stone and then jumps from 11 or 12 back to 13 stone, it is not recognisably so different."

An eye on lenses

A possible link between the use of soft extended-wear contact lenses and an exceptionally high risk of corneal ulceration has come under the scrutiny of the Department of Health.

All contact lenses, hard or soft, can, in theory, cause corneal ulcers. This is because they tend to stop oxygen reaching the cells on the surface of the eye, which then break down, forming an ulcer.

Should this become infected serious trouble can result with potential loss of sight. The problem is rare among users of "daily wear" contact

lenses as long as the eyes get a routine rest from the lenses and the lenses are kept clean. But there is now a suggestion that extended-wear users may be more prone to ulcers.

In the United States the Food and Drug Administration along with lens makers and eye specialists is conducting a survey to see if the allegations are correct. Privately some observers believe that a lack of hygiene could be at the root of the problem.

In a parliamentary answer given just before Christmas Mr Barney Hayhoe, health minister, said he was considering funding research into corneal ulcers and contact lens wear in the UK and said he was arranging the provision by manufacturers of adequate instructions to contact lens wearers.

Doctors' dilemma

If you were standing in a bus queue and a doctor was immediately behind you, would you expect the doctor to point out that you had a skin cancer on your neck that needed treatment or would you prefer to be left in ignorance?

It's a difficult question that has been exercising medical minds in the Journal of Medicine and Philosophy.

The consensus is that a doctor should tap you on the shoulder and suggest you seek further help.

One argument is that doctors have a duty to act in emergencies which may also involve them in giving unsolicited opinions. There's a caveat to this: the potential benefit of successful treatment must outweigh the psychological stresses, the invasion of privacy and the costs of tests and so on. If the doctor's wrong diagnosis turns out to be wrong.

Another opinion is that before the tap on the shoulder doctors must be pretty sure of several things. They must look upon the condition as a serious threat to health, be relatively certain of the diagnosis, and

Blind faith

Superstition can play havoc with operating schedules, according to a group of surgeons in Cardiff, who find many patients refuse to succumb to the slab and the knife if they are booked in on Friday 13 - the most recent one was last month.

Mr John Fairclough and colleagues from Cardiff Royal Infirmary set out to test whether there is any evidence to support the superstition and whether more accidents happen on these days. They analysed the attendance figures at the accident and emergency department, comparing the number on each Friday 13 - between 1975 and 1983 - with the number who turned up the Friday before, or Friday 6.

Those people who spend their life touching wood will be disappointed by the results. The range was from 130 on a Friday 13 to 280 on a Friday 6 - the average for Friday 13 was 196 and for Friday 6, 204. These figures are not statistically significant.

Although the surgeons point out that people may be more circumspect on Friday 13 and so less at risk, they tend to believe, more prosaically, that Friday 13 is just another day. For those still unconvinced this year should be relatively calm: only June 13 falls on a Friday. Next year may be more hazardous: 1987 carries three - in February, March and November.

Olivia Timbs and Lorraine Fraser

Advertisement for 'The weekend starts here' featuring a cartoon illustration of a man and woman in a domestic setting. Text includes 'In domestic bliss', 'Cleaning lady, gardener, nanny, au pair - call them what you will...', 'Living on another plane Douglas Adams hitch-hiking on', 'Five of the best Christmas Jumbo crossword winners', 'Portfolio £22,000 to be won', and 'Can you always get your copy of The Times?'.

Advertisement for 'Putting a price on success' featuring a cartoon illustration of a man and woman. Text includes 'FIRST PERSON', 'Margaret Duggan', 'Some time ago I gave up my job. I had worked full-time for 18 years, ever since the youngest of our children was at school.', 'but with trying to carry the whole domestic burden, I found that my grasp was slipping.', 'valentino BOUTIQUE', and 'Sale now on'.

Advertisement for 'HEAL'S SALE' featuring a cartoon illustration of a man and woman. Text includes 'NOW ON', '20% off Heal's Handmade 5' Kiltaire Classic Beds', '15% off Conway Bedroom Furniture in Oak Veneer', '20% off Caspa Upholstery Orion Swivel Chair in Black or Brown Leather from £275 to £199', 'Up to 15% off Children's Bedroom Furniture', '15% off Kew Dining Tables', '15% off Delia Dining Chairs', 'As well as great savings on samples, end of range goods, shop soiled & slightly damaged merchandise', '30% off Prelude, Illusion & Blanche Glass Suites from Orrefors', '30% off Canteens of Silver Plate Cutlery', '1/3rd off Thomas Medallion Tableware White Seconds', 'Great price cuts on Towels, Linens, Fabrics, Cutlery, Tableware and Kitchenware and much more', 'INTEREST FREE CREDIT AVAILABLE', and '196 Tottenham Court Rd London W1 and Tunsgate Guildford'.

THE TIMES DIARY

Grace and disfavour

York House, the St James's home of the Duke and Duchess of Kent, is unfit for human habitation - or at least unfit for royal habitation. As a result, the Kents are homeless, and when they return from their winter break to London next week they will lodge with the Duke's aunt, the Queen Mother, in Clarence House until temporary accommodation is fixed up for them in St James's Palace. Yesterday the Property Services Agency of the DoE said: "Parapet repairs were put in abeyance when it was discovered that further work was needed. It will start next month and cost £175,000." The Duke's office tells me the work will take six months.

Tie-in

The new Defence Secretary, George Younger, sported an ostentatious broad-striped tie for his first press briefing yesterday. Was it, a reporter asked, an old regimental tie? No, replied Younger, delighted that it had been noticed. "It is in fact the same tie that the head of the Ministry of Defence wears in all James Bond films." Did that mean he was going to be M, asked another reporter? "No, no - M's number one," replied Younger complacently. He devoted being offered the job prior to Heseltine's resignation yesterday. Either he had won the tie purely by chance - or he had been keeping it beside him just in case.

Mistimed

Julian Critchley must be enjoying some shades of Freude from the Heseltine affair: it was Heseltine, a hum from Shrewsbury and Oxford days, who sacked him from the editorship of *Town* magazine in the early 1960s. Critchley may even make a few bucks out of the resignation if he rushes forward completion of his biography of Heseltine. One problem, however: Critchley yesterday was out sunning himself on a Caribbean cruise. Meanwhile, Old Salopians are ruefully recalling that both of their number is Westland's boss, Sir John Cuckney.

Mrs Thatcher has changed her tune: Younger, was sacked by Mrs T as defence spokesman during the Tory opposition years in the Seventies and replaced by Sir Ian Gilmour, sacked as Lord Privy Seal in 1981 for wetness.

Heseltate

Heseltine's departure has ruffled feathers at the Institute of Directors which had just listed him, along with Princess Anne, as a chief speaker at its convention in the Albert Hall next month. Hurried discussions ensued yesterday. An IoD spokeswoman said: "As far as we are concerned, we are still expecting him as a backbench MP... he might have a lot to contribute." An hour later, the IoD was less sure. Another statement said: "At this moment he has not withdrawn his acceptance. We are still co-ordinating the situation."



It was either that or getting the chopper

Who Ken?

Is there no competent Tory prepared to take on Ken Livingstone at the next election? From 50 applicants, Brent East Conservatives have been unable to find a candidate of sufficient calibre to stand against him and plan to re-advertise. This time they expect a much better response. With Reg Fresson, the sitting MP ousted by Livingstone as the Labour candidate, now apparently ready to stand against him as an independent, there will doubtless be many opportunists who see the chance of Tory victory by default in this hitherto hopeless seat.

Nuked

W. H. Smith may soon be scrapping its "nuclear debate" section after the recent allegations - reported in this column - of a pro-unilateralist bias in its choice of books. Research by a retired teacher, W. R. Smith (no relation), showed that of 55 titles on supported CND arguments - even though there are 170 books on the market with no CND slant, Smith's managing director, Malcolm Field, replied by saying that the cheaper, more marketable, books on the subject are mostly neutral or CND and that the unilateralist line has made little effort to push them. Nevertheless, he admits that 25 titles bought by the firm during the CND-backed National Peace Book Week did not sell and will be sent back. "It is now open to some doubt whether the nuclear debate merits a separate section in our book departments," he said.

Why Heseltine finally snapped

The setting is Liverpool; the date, some time in 1982: the focus of attention, Michael Heseltine, Secretary of State for the Environment and Minister for Merseyside, on one of his regular Monday visits to his lighted ballroom. He is carefully fending off questions about a meeting of ministers at Number Ten when the recommendations of the minute to Mrs Thatcher, *It Took A Riot*, was unspiced by her hard men. "Michael," said a sympathetic journalist, "I sometimes wonder how you manage to sit it out in that Cabinet." The Minister for Merseyside said nothing but raised his eyes heavenward and smiled. Four years later he snapped. Mrs Thatcher, not known for her own delicacy in handling Cabinet conventions, had just invented a new one, custom-designed for her defence secretary: no more statements on Westland unless they had been approved by the Cabinet Office. The first cliché imbibed by the student of British government is that unlike many other Western nations we have no written constitution; that ours is a piece of pupy shaped by what Parliament, ministers and the courts impress upon it. It is not strictly true. Cabinet government does have a written constitution. It is called *Questions of Procedure for Ministers*. It is classified "Confidential", naturally, and is placed in the palms of every tyro minister by his private office. The guidelines consist of some 100 paragraphs of dos and don'ts, mainly don'ts. It binds ministers hand and foot, depriving them, in individual political terms, of their civil rights.

In the Cabinet room yesterday, Mrs Thatcher did not need to promulgate a new paragraph. For example, she might have reminded Heseltine of the section in *Questions of Procedure* dealing with collective responsibility which reads as follows: "Decisions reached by the Cabinet or Cabinet committees are normally announced and defended by the minister concerned as his own decisions. There may be rare occasions when it is desirable to emphasise the importance of some decisions by stating specifically that it is the decision of Her Majesty's government. This, however, should be the exception rather than the rule. The growth of any general practice whereby decisions of the Cabinet or of Cabinet committees were announced as such would lead to the embarrassing result that some decisions of government would be regarded as less authoritative than others. Critics of a decision reached by a particular committee could press for its review by some other committee or by the Cabinet, and the constitutional right of individual ministers to speak in the name of the government as a whole would be impaired." Since the meeting of EA, the Prime Minister's Cabinet committee on economic strategy, on December 9, Heseltine has succeeded in making the decision to let Westland seek succour from whom it may look distinctly "less authoritative than others". He himself has not ceased to "press for its review" by the full Cabinet - pressure which eventually brought about his downfall.

Although Mrs Thatcher is hardly the person to play the traditionalist in matters of cabinet government it would be an exaggeration to say that she had so hammered the conventions that we now have full-blooded prime ministerial rather than collective cabinet government - that, as one seasoned insider put it, "We have a form of presidential government in which she operates like a sovereign in her court". But Mrs Thatcher has refashioned the practice of cabinet government to reflect her dislike of collectivism in all its forms. And, typically, she did warn us. Three months before becoming Prime Minister she told Kenneth Harris: "It must be a conviction government. As Prime Minister I could not waste time having any internal arguments." The record is eloquent on the question, reflecting her passion both for economy and a commanding style of leadership. Cabinet meetings are down to between 40 and 45 a year (about half the annual total of the 1950s). The number of cabinet papers submitted by ministers for collective discussion is between 60 and 70 a year, one-sixth of the flow in the 1950s. She has kept her Cabinet committee structure very lean, too. She prefers informal ad hoc sessions at Number Ten with a departmental minister and his team defending a paper they have prepared for her, not the Cabinet against Mrs Thatcher and her team. When the full Cabinet is permitted to discuss an issue, she lets it be known at the outset what she thinks and it is up to the others to talk her out of it if they can. Heseltine is not alone in disliking

this adaptation of cabinet government. David Howell, sacked as transport secretary after the last general election, said in an interview last year: "Of course there is a deterring effect if one knows that one's going to go into a discussion not where various points of view will be weighed and gradually a view may be achieved, but into a huge argument where tremendous battle lines will be drawn up and everyone who doesn't fall into line will be hit on the head." In his complaints about the omission of his protest from Cabinet minutes, Heseltine has highlighted the power vested in the Cabinet Secretary, who controls the record of what was said. Although these tensions have been revealed before - most notably by Richard Crossman from inside Harold Wilson's first cabinet - past practice has been different. Cabinet papers available under the 30-year rule show that when ministerial resignations seemed possible, the cabinet secretary took unusually full minutes of the more difficult discussions. Heseltine is now free to voice his lament for cabinet government publicly. Nye Bevan once said: "There are only two ways of getting into the cabinet. One way is to crawl up the staircase of pre-emption on your belly, the other way is to kick them in the teeth." Heseltine, unlike some around the table, is not, and never has been, a staircase man.

The author is a Visiting Fellow at the Policy Studies Institute. His book, *Cabinet*, will be published by Blackwell in June.

Issues still to be faced

Although it has led to the spectacular resignation of a senior minister, the Westland helicopter row is intrinsically rather unimportant. Helicopters are a useful slice in the defence market, but Britain is not going to be left a state of helpless vulnerability if there is no independent British company capable of making them. The long-term economic and technological stakes in this particular industry are not all that high, either. Compared with the question of the Strategic Defence Initiative, which really does raise fundamental issues but about which there has been infinitely less public debate, Westland is a very small sideshow. And yet, for better or worse, it has become a symbolic test case involving not just the standing and careers of Messrs Leon Brittan and Michael Heseltine but three of the most important and emotive issues of contemporary British politics: Europeanism versus the Atlantic special relationship; cabinet versus prime ministerial government; government intervention versus the free market. We have been watching a genuinely high drama - and the fact that at least part of the outcome will rest with the Westland shareholders, a group of people who are largely uninterested in the wider implications, only adds to the dramatic irony.

Amid all the speculation about Heseltine's calculating reasons for raising the political stakes in the Westland case to such enormous heights, one motive, more altruistic, has usually been omitted, namely his real commitment to a European defence identity. He has for some years been an instinctive "European", after the rather bombastic nationalism that used to be his youthful political stock in trade. Some of this is still retained in his suspicion of American domination but is now combined with a modernist's enthusiasm for the economic and technological potential of the European market.

Since he became Defence Secretary he cultivated his European counterparts and signally failed to hit it off with Caspar Weinberger, the American defence secretary. More important, he actively backed all sorts of European initiatives in his field, including the European policy group within Nato, the revival of the Western European Union, and the European fighter aircraft. He was initially reluctant and sceptical about British participation in President Reagan's Star Wars "bonanza", and the fact that he was outmanoeuvred by the Prime Minister and obliged to toe her line on that issue probably fuelled his determination in this case.

What has been arrayed against him was not so much a definite anti-European sentiment in Whitehall, although there are pockets of that in the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) and in the Treasury, or even prime ministerial devotion to Reagan, but two other ingrained tendencies of the present British establishment. These are a weary and not entirely unjustified belief that any cooperative venture with the Europeans is bound to involve endless argument and frustration and a deep reluctance to admit that real political choices ever have to be made by the British, as between Europe and America. The first of these doubtless lies at the bottom of Sir John Cuckney's mind; the second has been imbedded in nearly all parts of Whitehall and in Downing Street (except

during Edward Heath's tenure) for 25 years, and reinforces the government's ideological desire to allow purely commercial considerations to hold sway. Heseltine probably overplayed his hand in talking on Mrs Thatcher the way did. There is no doubt that he has touched a very raw nerve by raising the issue of prime ministerial power. This is why it was so difficult for the Prime Minister to shut him up. It has been virtually impossible to talk to any minister or senior official outside the Cabinet Office for many months without hearing another tale of woe - about prime ministerial high-handedness, about Downing Street interference in detailed departmental matters and about the manipulative use of cabinet committees and ad hoc working groups - to say that decisions are taken in accordance with Mrs Thatcher's wishes.

All these complaints have been heard under most prime ministers since Lloyd George but never so loudly in a time of peace as they are today. Irritation within some parts of the Cabinet is now frothing over in this affair. Because other Conservatives have seen the problem developing over a long period they are not disposed to be nearly as outraged by Heseltine's intervention, or as protective of Mrs Thatcher, as they would have been a couple of years ago. One of the obvious mysteries of this fracas lies in the role of Leon Brittan. Anyone can see that he and Heseltine were never made to be bosom friends, but why did he come so strongly on the "non-interventionist" (Sikorsky) side? After all, his department, the DTI, has an interest in creating a European arms market, and in fostering European technology. He himself had been against the Star Wars deal on similar grounds.

The answer seems to lie partly in a purist determination that government purchasing power does not justify intervention in a company's commercial judgement. It also lies in a strong suspicion that Heseltine's dream of a rationalized European arms industry would actually cost the British taxpayer a great deal of money in government-subsidised research and development before it could be realised, and that the game is not worth the candle.

By stating the issues in these rather general terms I don't want to imply that Heseltine is a paladin, unswayed by any taint of self-interest calculation. On the contrary, he is by nature a very ambitious and experienced publicist on his own behalf. But that only makes his recent behaviour more interesting. He has been taking some very uncharacteristic gambles and one senses behind them, for once, an overriding emotional compulsion that goes beyond self-interest. The odds have been stacked too heavily against him to win this particular fight and there is a strong probability that he has damaged himself permanently in the process. But by dramatising the big issues he may have shifted opinion in Whitehall, in his own party and in the country.

After this episode certain realities assume a more definite outline - the idiom of pretending that a hands-off policy towards industry is an invariable principle, the practical limits of prime ministerial power and, most of all, the occasional necessity of groping out of our mid-Atlantic fog towards clearer decisions for the 21st century.

Anne Owers makes a plea for 10,000 facing statelessness



For Hong Kong Chinese the offer of Peking citizenship - but not for the minorities

"We chose Hong Kong because Hong Kong was part of the British Empire and because we had faith in the laws and the system of government of Great Britain... We thought we would be secure in being members of that community whose way of life we had adopted, whose laws and systems we respected, whose institutions we revered and to whom we deliberately gave our allegiance... We should not become the orphans of the Sino-British accord. Belonging to neither one country or another, we will almost certainly be left 'stateless', in the real sense of the word."

This petition sets out the dilemma of Hong Kong's 10,000 Indians as the colony prepares to return to China in 1997. It is a dilemma that should be considered when Parliament decides on the future of its nationals in Hong Kong next week. Like the 3.25 million Chinese, minorities are being offered a status, British National (Overseas), which carries no right to live anywhere and which they cannot pass on to their children. But, unlike Chinese British Nationals (Overseas), they will not also be citizens of China, with full rights to the country where they will live.

Nationality is a question of belonging for a state it defines the people for whom it has ultimate responsibility; for individuals it defines the country where they belong as of right and gives them the security and self-confidence to plan their future. Almost all of Hong Kong's people feel that they belong to Hong Kong. But, unlike other British dependencies, Hong Kong is not passing from colonial status as it returns to China. Its minorities have therefore fallen through a gap between the terms of the Sino-British agreement and Britain's convoluted nationality laws.

The first has created "one country, two systems" - Hong Kong as a capitalist enclave within China - but has only given Chinese nationality to Hong Kong residents who are ethnically Chinese. The second has created "one country, six citizenships" - six forms of British nationality of which only one, British citizenship, carries the right to live in Britain and which has made Britain the only country in the world to refuse entry to its own nationals. British Asians from East Africa were the first victims of this unique idea of citizenship; the on-Chinese minorities in Hong Kong are the latest. It is causing acute anxiety and a widespread feeling of betrayal.

The minorities in Hong Kong are of Indian, Eurasian and European origin. Some of their ancestors helped the British raise the flag in 1842. They came as traders and entrepreneurs; they took on the traditional "buffer" role between the expatriate British and the Chinese population, in the police, army and clerical services. Some had British

fathers who over married their Chinese mothers; some were prisoners of war during the Japanese occupation. Their lack of an effective nationality, their position as ethnic minorities and their past colonial role all combine to make them feel very vulnerable. Official explanations have tried to veil the problem. It is claimed that the minorities have security in Hong Kong under the agreement with China. The latter has indeed generously permitted all on-Chinese aliens who have had the right to live in Hong Kong to retain that right. However, most non-British aliens will also have full citizenship status in another country, which would hold ultimate responsibility for them. China has made it clear that it regards the status of British National (Overseas) merely as a temporary travel document facility. It is also claimed that the British nationality proposals avoid statelessness. In one sense this is true: all British nationals will be given a British status after 1997, but that status will not carry any rights. Statelessness is not avoided by giving people names and passports: if it is so easy, there would be a widely held belief in the world. Real statelessness is prevented by providing rights, responsibilities and

above all a place to belong. The distribution and proliferation of new titles is about as effective a remedy against statelessness as airlifting luncheon vouchers as a remedy against famine in Ethiopia. Then there is the fear of immigration to Britain, the panic button which is pressed every time the rights of non-white British nationals are at issue. Hong Kong is depicted as a country full of Chinese people desperate to enter Britain. This is quite untrue. Hong Kong is a sophisticated trading country, the major financial centre of the Far East, and British people there do not wish to leave their homes or come to Britain. They merely want security to stay there at a time of unprecedented change. The immigration argument invariably ignores the large number of people who already have rights to live in Britain: 200 million EEC nationals, about 10 million white South Africans, up to 9 million Commonwealth citizens with British-born parents or grandparents. All these potential immigrants are white; their right to enter or work is unchallenged and unthreatening. The fourth and final veil held up by officials has just been torn down by the Hong Kong Legislative Council. It was argued that special

treatment for minorities would be racially divisive and would cause resentment among the majority Chinese population. It is true that many Chinese British people in Hong Kong are angry at the progressive devaluation of their own British nationality. But the problem of the minorities is that they are caught between two racially discriminatory nationality laws, those of Britain and China. In a debate on the nationality proposals on December 4 last year, Hong Kong Legislative councillors, almost all of whom were of Chinese origin, unanimously urged the British Parliament to grant the minorities special treatment.

That request has had no response and has generated no publicity in Britain. The fears of other groups of British people such as the Protestants of Northern Ireland, anxious that the agreement with Dublin might make them "some sort of semi-British citizens" and the Falkland Islanders receive greater attention.

British minorities in Hong Kong are the victims of spathy and racial discrimination because, unlike the Falklanders and Gibraltarans who live in the only other British dependencies which cannot achieve independence, they will not be provided with a route to full British citizenship. Britain's failure to take responsibility for ensuring that all British people in Hong Kong have an effective and secure nationality status is now creating insecurity for them and for Hong Kong; in the long term, the legacy of bitterness and mistrust which it has created could do even greater harm to Britain's own long-term interests.

The author is research and development officer for the Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants.

What will befall Hong Kong's dispossessed?

Professor with the healing touch

Unlike some of his fellow countrymen, Professor Bolaji Akinyemi, Nigeria's minister of external affairs, has a soft spot for Britain. He did his doctorate in political science at Trinity College, Oxford, and then a couple of years ago went to St John's College, Cambridge, as an overseas scholar. He was about to return to Cambridge at the time of the Nigerian coup last autumn, but was asked by the new military leader, General Ibrahim Babangida, to become foreign minister. So sudden was the switch that he decided to leave his family in Cambridge, where his children were happily at school.

He has been particularly gratified, therefore, that his official visit to London this week has produced agreements that are expected to lead to the normalization of diplomatic relations between Britain and its former West African colony after a two-year hiatus. At last we are talking to each other again like two civilized people," he told me during a break in a heavy schedule of meetings with top people in government and finance. Relations between Nigeria and Britain have been strained since each withdrew its high commissioner after the kidnapping in July 1984 of Umaru Dikko, a former

Nigerian minister, and the attempt to smuggle him back to Nigeria in a crate to face corruption charges. Although rejecting his request for political asylum, Britain refused to extradite him and Dikko is still living in London. For the Nigerians the Dikko affair came to symbolize a broader set of resentments about the attitudes of their former imperial masters as well as a widely held belief that some British companies exploited Nigeria at the height of its oil boom. It is significant that the delicate issue of Johnson Matthey Bankers has been high on Akinyemi's agenda - the bank has claims totalling £100 million against Nigeria, although some are alleged to be fraudulent. The Nigerians also believe that Britain was deliberately unsympathetic over the economic problems Nigeria faced when oil prices plunged. Many blame Britain, by far Nigeria's largest creditor, for its failure to reach an international agreement rescheduling its £11.8 billion external debt.

Britain, along with Nigeria's other major creditors, has been insisting that any debt rescheduling should hinge on Lagos reaching an understanding with the International Monetary Fund on a \$1.8 billion loan. The previous regime, led by

General Mohammed Buhari, had rejected the conditions which the IMF attached to its loan offer, and so, after months of public debate, has the present Nigerian government. Instead of accepting the IMF loan, President Babangida has introduced a set of hudgetary reforms, including a cut in domestic petroleum subsidies, a pledge to introduce a "realistic" exchange rate for the naira and measures to boost agriculture, which together are intended to bring about the country's economic recovery.

It is this economic package, which in fact meets most of the conditions demanded by the IMF, that has enabled the two countries to move towards a restoration of full diplomatic relations. Over the past three days Mrs Thatcher, Sir Geoffrey Howe, the Foreign Secretary, and Leon Brittan, Secretary for Trade and Industry, have all told Akinyemi that they approve the recovery programme - so much so, in fact, that Brittan has offered to open talks on a new line of credit to Lagos.

"This offer is a major achievement," said Akinyemi. "It means that Britain is no longer insisting we accept the IMF loan before offering us new credit, and it will be a signal to our other creditors that Britain is

confident Nigeria is now back on stream."

Akinyemi, a former director of the Nigerian Institute of International Affairs (Nigeria's equivalent of Chatham House), said improved Anglo-Nigerian relations will make it easier to deal with other differences that separate the two countries.

Top of the British list of complaints is the case of two British helicopter engineers, Angus Farterston and Kenneth Clark, who were recently jailed for 14 years for helping to steal a small private aircraft from Lagos airport.

There was a widespread feeling in Britain that the severity of the sentences was politically motivated, in retaliation for Britain's refusal to give up Dikko and the 12-year sentence imposed by a British court on Major Mohammed Yusuf, one of Dikko's kidnappers.

"I assured Mrs Thatcher and Sir Geoffrey there was no relationship between the case of the two British engineers and Mr Dikko," Akinyemi said. "It is totally alien to President Babangida's nature to make these people scapegoats for what has happened in Nigeria."

Nicholas Ashford
Diplomatic Correspondent

moreover... Miles Kingdon
TV's great chat compomerate

Chat shows and quiz programmes are often said to be the cheapest kind of television to put on. Not so; TV programmes about TV programmes are the cheapest of all, involving only one man and a first-class pen and paper. The other night I awoke from a strange nightmare, in which I dreamt I was watching an omnibus programme about TV called *Do They Mean Clive James's Points of View?* As far as I can remember, it went like this. Ludovic Kennedy: Good evening, tonight I have with me a Lecturer in Communications called Raymond, who teaches at Stuart Hall, the young punk choreographer Chad Valley, and the late Gilbert Harding. This week we have been watching *Do They Mean Us? Clive James on Television and Points of View*. Voice: Bimney oh Reilly oh Jumping Jimmy Choke... Barry Took... writes the Duke of Dorsetshire on Yorkshire. Voice: ... Where on earth does Ludovic Kennedy drag these hopeless pundits up from? I find it scandalous that I have to pay a £50 licence fee to watch these half-baked media notities being paid to talk about their telly viewing. Why can't they write their complaints on a postcard and send them to you, Barry, like all of us other non-notities, and take their chance? Barry Took: Perhaps they do, your Grace, perhaps they do. There are a lot of postcards here we never get round to reading! But one we did read was from Mrs Mills-Dyke of Yorkshire who says... Voice: Dear *Points of View*, I was standing in a post office queue the other day for half an hour waiting for my TV licence, and got chatting to the Duke of Dorsetshire who was queuing in front of me. All we had to amuse us was a video set showing Rose Office ads, and me and the duke got to thinking: why don't they show repeats of popular programmes like yours, so at least we'd get our money's worth?

Barry Took: And why don't you send for your licence to Swansea like everyone else? But it's a good idea and I'll put it to Colonel Gaddafi, or whoever owns most shares in the Post Office. Ludovic Kennedy: Raymond? What did you think of the programme? Raymond: I think the Duke's quite right, I can't imagine why anyone says me to spout my half-baked ideas. But since you ask... Ludovic: Chad? Chad: I sink Barry Took's jacket stinks. Ludovic: The late Gilbert Harding? (Silence) Clive? Clive James: Hello there. (Hysterical laughter) You might think that commercials for underexam deadnoses were much the same round the world. Not so in Indonesia. (Silence) Barry Took: ... writes the Duke of Dorsetshire on Yorkshire. Ludovic: Perhaps it might even get the Pons-smelling better. (Hysterical, uncomfortable laughing) Perhaps not. Derek James: For bimney, hang on a mo. Is he saying we Brits don't wash? Strewh. Ludovic: Here's a cake of soap, Clive. What a liberty. Ludovic: Raymond? Raymond: Derek Jameson has his critics, but I think he is, in a very real sense, the most honest television chat show. Raymond: I don't know. Clive James, on the other hand, has done for Japanese television what Esther Rantzen has done for crooked plumbers and builders... in other words, uses dirty jokes for a high moral purpose. Derek Jameson: 'ere, steady on, I didn't quite get that. A bit deep, this one. We Brits don't trust intellectuals. Cor. Stone the crows. Barry Took: And that's all we have time for. So an revoir... Derek Jameson: TTFN... Clive James: So long (apoplectic laughter and collapse all round). Ludovic: And in a moment there'll be a proper programme.



P.O. Box 7, 200 Gray's Inn Road, London WC1X 8EZ. Telephone: 01-837 1234

A VERY GOOD RESIGNATION

There are many senior Tories - in and out of the Cabinet - who must feel jealous at the manner of Mr Michael Heseltine's resignation yesterday. To have lost an argument, to have picked up one's papers and rushed out into Downing Street, to have delivered a statesmanlike apology to a televised press conference for the more faint-hearted resignation of Mr Michael Heseltine's resignation yesterday, to have lost an argument, to have picked up one's papers and rushed out into Downing Street, to have delivered a statesmanlike apology to a televised press conference for the more faint-hearted resignation of Mr Michael Heseltine's resignation yesterday, to have lost an argument, to have picked up one's papers and rushed out into Downing Street, to have delivered a statesmanlike apology to a televised press conference for the more faint-hearted resignation of Mr Michael Heseltine's resignation yesterday...

meeting that will direct the company's future. If he had saved his resignation until after the Sikorsky-Fiat bid, had been accepted it would have looked like pique. If his European allies had won their adjournment he would have lost cause to resign. He now has the time, freedom, and privileged information with which to fight the European campaign in which he so passionately believes. His cool performance at yesterday's press conference suggests that he may sway many an uncommitted shareholder in the days to come. The manner in which he denies personal ambition is likely to be persuasive to many whose relations with their stockbroker is closer than it is with their local MP.

It is a dubious cliché that the Tory party does not like disloyalty. What it certainly does not like is excessive disloyalty. To say that hers is "no proper way to run a Government", to attack the ill temper of her Cabinet committees; to accuse her of virtual duplicity in pretending to possess an even-handed attitude to Westland's future when she had no such thing; these charges were tougher than his supporters were expecting and, indeed, than they might have liked.

If the Europeans eventually emerge victorious his position on the back benches will be bolstered by the support of very many in the Defence and Industry lobby of Tory MPs who have seen their new champion fight his corner and win. If the Sikorsky-Fiat bid wins he will still be seen as a doughty champion. The danger will come when the Westland affair is over. As other former Cabinet members have found, today's leading man can easily become tomorrow's spear-carrier. The back benches are not the natural place for Mr Heseltine to thrive. He can make neither the big gestures (no more Posing, no more Merseyside), nor fill his time in departmental management (no more romanticising the cut of efficiency). He will be left with what he does worse, and Mr Peter Walker does best, the gentle massaging of parliamentary alliances in the bars and tea rooms of Westminster.

But as you say in your leading article, the environment has become a major issue of public concern, whether in relation to inner cities, the green belt or the protection of the countryside. To the question, "How much greenery can Britain afford?", the answer is simply, "More". In these circumstances, there is everything to be said for the creation of a new Department of Environmental Protection, responsible for planning, conservation, pollution control, leisure and recreation and for promoting environmental policies throughout government. This would ensure for the first time a secretary of state/Cabinet with an effective voice for the environment and no other departmental distractions.

With this prospect in view, it may seem to have been rash for Mr Heseltine to have launched quite such an outspoken attack on the Prime Minister yesterday.

The actual casus belli - the Cabinet's acceptance of a scheme for clearing members' statements on an inter-departmental issue - is not unprecedented. But by stressing the fact that it would not allow him to make statements or answer questions on matters which he had already raised he has skillfully cast Mrs Thatcher in the light of censor rather than information co-ordinator.

The Prime Minister's mode of Government was more widely tolerable when her administration had a sense of urgency - to control the unions, to bring down inflation, to win the Falklands war. It is less acceptable if the momentum is seen to be slowing down. It is an issue which will last. It is an issue to which Mr Heseltine has been clever to link to his future.

SERVICE AND TRAINING

During her term of office, Mrs Thatcher has presided over one of the swiftest and most spectacular peace-time extensions of the State. Its agent has been the Manpower Services Commission: its programme the Youth Training Scheme. Government has made youth its business by virtually raising the age of compulsory education and training to 18 for large numbers of the population.

National service, of some kind, has also attracted those who tend to talk loosely about youthful "alienation". Behind both stands the evidence of opinion polls which show that young and old alike might welcome some period of youthful service, military or civil, for the common good. There is a half-articulated belief, strongest among those of an age to have experienced the drills and routines of compulsory service in the military, that what matters most is not the content of a period of national service but the very fact of a common experience for a generation, serving to bind together classes and conditions in a society with a diminishing stock of common culture.

Youth training has had little to do with ideology. Faced with the growing scale of youth joblessness and the evident uprearedness of 16-year-olds for the labour market, ministers have acted. To justify their large expenditures they could call to their aid arguments from economics and demography about the need to delay entry to the job market while a hulging age cohort passes through adolescence.

Like so many emanations from the Social Democrats, yesterday's paper on a scheme for national service through the voluntary social service organizations correctly identifies an area where Government might act imaginatively, but then fails the practical test. The party's papers reek of desk-top Fabianism, of plans drawn up by ivory tower committees which if they were ever to be applied in the real world of trade unions, self-interested professionals, stolid bureaucrats and criminal inner-city youth would result in a squandering of public money. The Social Democrats sit on the fence. They dislike the notion of a full-blooded scheme of military or civil conscription for 18-year-olds, but they are also too statist merely to want a thousand local schemes of voluntary work to flourish in untidy profusion.

There are arguments for sociology, too, and from the crime statistics that it is better to keep a pair of young hands gainfully occupied than idle and prone to theft or violence. However it is justified, YTS exists, and however much progress is made in lowering the costs of young labour and freeing up the job market at its junior end, improved youth training will continue to be a central concern of Government. The question is: is that all Government should be doing for youth?

Instead they opt for a central quango doling out pots of money to local projects over which it could exercise no proper supervision unless, like the MSC, it were prepared to countenance both a large bureaucracy and the potential loss of sums in wasteful schemes.

Advocates from several sides of politics have recently come together on the common ground of extending the Government's concern with youth into some sort of programme of national service. The very phrase excites those who see in a period of compulsory service at arms a recipe for better defence.

Other cultural representations will recall to our successors in as happy and vivid a style the opportunities opened up by the Channel fixed link as did Johann Strauss's music in today's concert remind us of the great benefits provided by the Suez Canal in the 19th century. Prost Neujahr 1986! Vivat Europa! Yours faithfully, PETER BEAZLEY, Hotel im Palais Schwarzenberg, Schwarzenbergplatz 9, A-1030 Vienna, Austria, January 1.

Underwater music?

From Mr Peter Beazley, MEP for Bedfordshire South (European Democrat (Conservative)). Sir, As the Vienna New Year Concert reminded us, not only did Verdi write *Aida* to celebrate the opening of the Suez Canal some 120 years ago but Johann Strauss was sufficiently enthused by it to write a very nice piece for it, too!

Would it not be an appropriate gesture for the winner of the Channel fixed-link contract to sponsor a competition for the opening of the Channel link to be celebrated in a suitable artistic manner?

This Channel fixed link will be the first vast structural enterprise linking member states to be undertaken since the formation of the European Community. It will furthermore be the most striking representation of the European Community to the ordinary everyday European citizen. I say European because the Germans, the Dutch, the Belgians, the Spanish and citizens of all member states will use it as much as the British and French. We may further hope that in 120 years' time the pieces of music and

other cultural representations will recall to our successors in as happy and vivid a style the opportunities opened up by the Channel fixed link as did Johann Strauss's music in today's concert remind us of the great benefits provided by the Suez Canal in the 19th century. Prost Neujahr 1986! Vivat Europa! Yours faithfully, PETER BEAZLEY, Hotel im Palais Schwarzenberg, Schwarzenbergplatz 9, A-1030 Vienna, Austria, January 1.

vision unless, like the MSC, it were prepared to countenance both a large bureaucracy and the potential loss of sums in wasteful schemes.

The leader of the SDP committee which produced this plan is Ms Sue Slipman, a lady whose smooth and speedy translation from the central committee of the Communist Party to that of the SDP amazed even connoisseurs of political apostasy. Ms Slipman has been a trade union official. The document therefore bows to the municipal unions. It necessarily skirts over the difficulties in recruiting volunteer young people to social services which are heavily unionized: it is difficult to see the National Union of Public Employees endorsing a scheme for using young people as home helps or auxiliary kitchen hands.

That there are people, some old, some in ill health, some incapacitated, who need assistance in forms other than cash is unquestionable. There are potential young volunteers - not necessarily unemployed - with energy and time. What needs hard thought is how to link them. In Britain, sadly but inevitably, national agencies tend to dictate national standards which employ bureaucrats antipathetic to the voluntary spirit. Innovation in public policy will entail some scheme by which central Government can better motivate and assist, without smothering or manning, the myriad of local groups which already can intimately link the needy and the helpers. The SDP's is not that scheme. Yet once again, with the freedom given by the party's distance from power, it has provided outlines for others - including government ministers - to challenge and fill in.

own accord and without help from anybody else; as a batsman might himself score all the runs needed to win a match. How widespread is this debased usage? Have any of your other readers encountered it? Yours, etc, GAVIN EWART, 57 Kanilworth Court, Lower Richmond Road, SW15, January 2.

Sporting firsts

From Mr I. Adam-Hill Sir, In spite of the numerous references to sport found in the Bible (Sporting Diary, December 28 and Mr Fritz Spieg, January 6) Psalm 147, verse 10, "He hath no pleasure in the strength of an horse: neither delighteth he in any man's legs" (Oxford Psalter) makes it quite clear that the Almighty's taste in sport is not as catholic as one might have expected. Yours faithfully, IJUAN ADAM-HILL, 18 Queen's Avenue, Dorchester, Dorset, January 1.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

A new safeguard for environment

From the Vice-President of the Social Democratic Party

Sir, Those of us who recall the frequent changes made to the central organisation of government by Mr Harold Wilson and Mr Heath in the 1960s and 1970s are wary of further change. It is too easy for a prime minister to alter the structure of existing Whitehall departments or invent new ones in order to avoid policy choices, to resolve personal differences between ministers or for cosmetic reasons. But the continuing elash you describe (leading article, January 8) between Mr Michael Jopling and Mr William Waldegrave arises from an issue of substance. Mr Jopling is a Cabinet minister with appropriate responsibility, both within the Cabinet and to Parliament. Mr Waldegrave is a junior member of Mr Baker's team at the Department of the Environment, where in practice local government and housing are the dominant matters.

nothing else it had amply demonstrated that material wealth, however evenly distributed, is not an entirely satisfactory end in the pursuit of human contentment. In describing the economic weal of the nation as the Government's first goal you perpetuate a falsity which, I suspect, becoming more and more apparent in a society which has acquired the habit of greeting what is given with cries for more.

Might I correct your error by suggesting that the important question is not how much greenery Britain can afford, but how much more greenery we can afford to lose. Yours faithfully, RICHARD CRABTREE, 3 Temple Gardens, Temple, EC4, January 8.

From Mr Richard Booth

Sir, Your columns are frequently full of academics complaining about cutbacks. Theoretically this would possibly lead to a revival of rural areas as their decline has often been ascribed to a brain drain. With a university degree there is virtually no suitable employment for a graduate in the kind of small Welsh border town I live in (population approx 2,000). With lower expectations they may become more usable members of the community rather than competing fruitlessly for highly paid positions in the bureaucracy of big government or big business.

We do not in rural areas especially mind the brain drain (a word of disagreement from a true countryman) is, never trust anybody who produces a brochure! How much further will the beautiful land of Britain be violated before we accept the elementary common sense that our quality of life depends on the manual workers? Unclear ditches, gates off their hinges, hazardous barbed-wire fences that Wales needs is an army of the uneducated! Yours faithfully, RICHARD BOOTH, Director, Richard Booth Hay Castle Limited, The Castle, Hay-on-Wye, Hereford, January 3.

From Mr Richard Crabtree Sir, In your editorial today you deal with the conflict between environmental and agricultural considerations and conclude by declaring that "it is the Government as a whole, holding the economic weal of the nation as its first goal, that will have to decide how much greenery Britain can afford". I would have thought that if the social history of this country over the last century had taught us

Westland's future

From Sir Fred Catherwood, MEP for Cambridge and North Bedfordshire (European Democrat (Conservative))

Sir, When I was managing director of an Anglo-American company some time ago, I asked for full access to the American parent company's research. I was refused because "our business depends on our major American customers and our newest technology goes to them first to keep them ahead of their own competition". Several years later, as director general of "Neddy" (National Economic Development Office) I wanted, after the failure of our second application for EEC membership, to explore the possibility of a north Atlantic free trade area. I was discouraged by two successive foreign secretaries on the grounds that partnership within Europe was a partnership among equals, whereas in an American partnership we would be completely dominated by the Americans. Yours faithfully, FRED CATHERWOOD, Share Hill, Cambridge, January 8.

From Lord Balfour of Inchrye Sir, Political bidding in millions will not answer our main question. How can the British Forces obtain the helicopter most suitable to their needs?

Is it from a hastily thrown together European consortium of

Royal imprint

From Mr Stuart Rose Sir, Mr Hetherington's preference (January 3) for "portraits" rather than silhouettes on UK postage stamps calls for some comment. Silhouettes of the Queen's portrait appear only on commemorative issues, mostly in monochrome, whereas the definitive issues carry a profile portrait in tone. The design concept of a UK definitive stamp has by tradition, since 1840, been emblematic, not pictorial. Therefore the up-dating of the Sovereign's effigy, which is the dominant visual element, would turn the design from being an emblem into a pictorial representation.

Similarly, the profile or formal portrait is more appropriate as an emblem than is the more naturalistic proper portrait (the three-quarter front view). The comparison is evident in the two definitive issues of this reign, that which uses the Dorothy Wilding photographic proper portrait in 1953 and that which was based on Arnold Machin's sculptured bas-relief formal profile portrait, which is still in use. Mr Hetherington's hankering after the emblematic design approach, complete with typographical embellishment, applied to both definitive and commemorative issues, suggests that there is still public unease towards a realistically illustrative "cigarette card" solution. Yours faithfully, STUART ROSE, Walpole House, East Street, Coggeshall, Essex, January 7.

Famine in Africa

From the Director of Voluntary Service Overseas and others Sir, Tragically 1985 had to be a year of relief in Africa, but it is essential that the New Year should bring the beginning of the loopy process of recovery and reform. It would be sad if, after a year of supreme effort in the face of the Saharan famine, the governments and peoples of the rich, industrialised countries turned away their attention. Though it is true the immediate emergency has receded and the number at risk nearly halved, there are still many areas where emergency food will have to be provided. Recovery from a disaster on this scale does not come quickly. The

parties who have not hitherto worked closely together on helicopter development and production? Is it from a consortium that has no central design and research staff? Is it from a consortium that has no central manufacturing plant? Is it from a consortium that has no agreed programme as to who will do what? Is it from a consortium that has no central administrative organisation?

The European proposed consortium must be compared to prospects with Sikorsky, which is the most important and biggest helicopter corporation in the world. At Hartford, Connecticut, they have a completely modern set-up, from research through design, development and production, all of which will go into the pool to the benefit of the Westland-Sikorsky efforts. It is the Sikorsky products which British Airways, on their scheduled services and to the North Sea rigs, rely on. Relations between the companies have always been close in technical matters, which inevitably will be to the benefit of both parties. Sikorsky must have future designs in mind and these could well answer the question I asked at the beginning of this letter. Yours faithfully, BALFOUR OF INCHRYE (Former Chairman British European Airways Helicopters Limited), End House, 15 St Mary Abbot's Place, Kensington, W8, January 8.

drought removed from the people affected by it any control over their own lives and that control needs to be restored. That means restocking herds, improving water supplies and the ability to maintain them, planting and tending trees and many other tasks. In the longer term the whole system which undermined the region's agricultural potential needs reform. We feel sure that none of the people who contributed so generously in 1985 will be under any illusion that the problems could be solved in one short year. If all that effort and generosity is going to bring lasting change then the support from both government and non-government sources must be maintained. The media have already recognised that people are eager to hear

A case to concede on invalid care

From Sir David Price, MP for Eastleigh (Conservative)

Sir, In considering the merits of Mrs Jacqueline Drake's claim (report, January 9) that married women who give up work to care for a disabled relative should receive the invalid care allowance, I would remind you of the recommendation of the House of Commons Social Services Select Committee in our report on community care (February, 1985), in paragraph 146, we wrote: of equal concern is the exclusion of married women who are the most frequent carers for the mentally disabled from eligibility for invalid care allowance. We recommend the extension of invalid care allowance to married women as soon as resources are available.

Therefore, would it not be more fitting - and more gracious - for the Government to implement our recommendation now, rather than wait until they are compelled to do so by an adverse judgement in the European Court of Justice in Luxembourg? Yours truly, DAVID PRICE, House of Commons.

Drink and driving

From Mr T. David

Sir, Your readers are well accustomed to the seasonal outburst of hysteria on the subject of drinking and driving. Reports in your issue of January 3 hint at even more Draconian regulations and I therefore crave space to offer an alternative perspective. Older readers will recall the annual hysteria which used to surround road deaths at Bank Holidays. Ministers of Transport and others in the media would pontificate daily as the grim totals over Easter were reported. That particular hysteria went away overnight when it was realized that the Bank holiday figures were less than the normal daily average when commercial vehicles added to the carnage. Could it be that Christmas, too, sees fewer accidents than normal? We would do well to re-examine the uniquely vague drink-drive law as it stands. It remains the only law where I, an occasional drinker, do not know when I have broken it. It is the only law which discriminates against those with a low body weight and therefore women. It is also one of the few laws allowing no effective defence in court and mandatory sentencing, which might explain its appeal to the police.

We should provide penalties and deterrent sentences in the case of those guilty of recognizable traffic offences. Whether the cause is intemperance, impatience or incompetence is not terribly relevant. Yours faithfully, T. DAVID, 53 Shaw Green Lane, Peasling, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire.

From Major J. D. Summers Sir, I wonder if much thought has been given by Parliament or the police authorities on the drink and drive problem for single people who are elderly, widows and widowers, who have no one with whom to share the driving. There is no public transport and country taxi drives are hugely expensive, far beyond their means. An invitation to Christmas lunch or new year's party has to be refused or not enjoyed. A modest glass of sherry and two glasses of wine puts them in dire peril of losing all means of transport for a year and perhaps the necessity to sell their house and move to a town or large village where there is a shop. These are not the drivers who kill or maim. Yours sincerely, DAVID SUMMERS, Marsh Cottage, Old Romney, Romney Marsh, Kent, January 3.

We should provide penalties and deterrent sentences in the case of those guilty of recognizable traffic offences. Whether the cause is intemperance, impatience or incompetence is not terribly relevant. Yours faithfully, T. DAVID, 53 Shaw Green Lane, Peasling, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire.

All contributions

From Mr Roy Hay

Sir, Authors are prone to grumble about their publishers and the sales of their books which has been panned with such high hopes. So it is most heartening to learn that the Public Lending Right authority is really zealous looking after authors' interests. Both my wife, Frances Perry, and I have received communications from the PLR office entitled "PLR notification of titles found". These are titles they have discovered and which we did not register because we thought they were probably too old. But it appears they are still being borrowed from libraries and for which, hopefully we shall receive some payments under the PLR scheme, which, however small, will be gratefully received. Yours sincerely, ROY HAY, Bulls Cross Cottage, 3 Bulls Cross, Enfield, Middlesex, January 2.

reports of what progress is being made, and one must hope that they will keep that interest alive. Famine is not a sudden disaster. It can be foreseen and prevented. So let 1986 be the first year of a determined effort to eradicate famine through our support for the greater self-reliance of 1985's famine victims. Yours faithfully, NELL MCINTOSH, Director, Voluntary Service Overseas, J. FILOCHOWSKI, Director, CAFOD, MICHAEL TAYLOR, Director, Christian Aid, BOB GELDOF, Bandaid, FRANK JUDD, Director, OXFAM, NICHOLAS HINTON, Director, Save the Children, c/o Voluntary Service Overseas, 9 Belgrave Square, Sw1 January 6.



ON THIS DAY

JANUARY 10 1785
Ballooning began on June 15 1783 with the ascent at Annonay, near Lyons of a bag filled with smoke from a straw fire - the contrivance of the Montgolfier brothers. On November 21 the first manned free flight ascent in a balloon was made by Pilatre de Rozier and the Marquis d'Arlandes. Although The Times failed to record the first cross Channel flight by Blanchard and Jeffries on January 7 1785 thereafter countless ascents and activities were reported in the paper in its foundation year.

[AN EARLY BALLOONIST]

Extract of a Letter from Birmingham, Jan 6
"On Tuesday morning last, though it rained incessantly and was remarkably hazy and foggy, the most numerous assembly of people of every denomination that I ever was known appeared in this town to see Mr. Harper ascend with his balloon. The crowd for the Tennis Court was by far too great and numbers of very respectable persons embraced situations that on any other occasion would have been rejected. About eleven o'clock the bell rung as an intimation that the balloon was filling which was completed by twelve. Twenty minutes after twelve the modest adventurer took his seat in a very increasing rain amidst the gratulations of the admiring spectators. Near a quarter of an hour's employ, in making a proper equiptment and in taking leave of some particular friends; when the silken cords that kept the machine from rising were loosened by the fair hands of two persons who seemed to do that duty with apparatus that in the space of the whole apparatus rose with the greatest majesty gratifying the most unbounded wishes by the sublimity of the spectacle. In making a number of the populace being in an adjacent field, our aerial traveller lowered himself amongst them, as if to take a friendly farewell; and having heaved out some ballast, he re-ascended with respectful dignity whilst the sky resounded the plaudits of the admiring multitude distancing the view of every human object in two minutes. For the first six minutes the rain increased to an uncommon degree. In four minutes more he shot above every cloud and enjoyed the vivifying influence of the most radiant sun and pure ether-making such observations as were dictated by the scientific. There however, the compass rose continually varying as the currents of air changed.

"The barometer at the time of his ascent stood at twenty-eight inches and three eighths, which indicated a degree of rarity of the atmosphere not frequently met with. In the space of the large quantity of water that had accumulated upon the balloon and its surrounding out, very considerably diminished the power of the ascent of the machine. The cold was by no means so intense as might naturally have been expected as the thermometer at no time was lower than twenty-eight degrees on Fahrenheit's scale; at his ascent it stood at forty. He gradually ascended for the space of thirty minutes, at which time he was elevated four thousand three hundred feet above the earth.

"In the progress of this aerial excursion, Mr. Harper experienced no other inconvenience than what might be expected in the change of climate, wet and sunshine, except a temporary deafness.

"About two o'clock, he descended at Milestone Green, near Newcastle, in Staffordshire, near fifty miles from the same evening, post, with his balloon and car, the latter of which, with some of his instruments, we learn with great concern were unfortunately injured in anchoring at Milestone Green, notwithstanding the kind assistance of many people at that place; and yesterday he arrived and received the unbounded plaudits of the inhabitants, the populace having taken the horses from his carriage, and drew him in triumph through the principal streets.

"At Trentham, Mr. Harper indulged himself with a view of Lord Gower's; and seeing a person at some distance hailed him with his speaking trumpet, to know how far he was from Birmingham. He was answered "About 40 miles, Master, but you are going the wrong way."

Born to blush unseen

From the Reverend Canon Michael Mayne

Sir, "But did anyone know a Kerenhappuh?" asks the Rev John Titchhurst (January 3). Why, yes. In Canterbury, 40 years ago, where Dr Hewlett Johnson (the "Red Dean"), following the example of Job and delighted with the birth of two daughters in his old age, called them Keziah and Kerenhappuh (Job xlii, v. 14; in modern translations "Cassia" and "Mascara"). Unfortunately it was not easy for us boys to get to know them socially. Although the dean was chairman of our governors, he had erected on his house a very large notice proclaiming "Christians ban nuclear weapons", and the Deanery was placed out of bounds sine die. Yours faithfully, MICHAEL MAYNE, The University Church, Cambridge.

From Mrs Kate Wedd

Sir, My husband regrets the omission from Mr Titchhurst's list of Victorian girls' names (January 3) the charming neo-classical name borne by all his mother's sisters - Eurante. Yours faithfully, KATE WEDD, 15 Elmdale Road, Bristol, Avon.

From Rabbi Jonathan A. Romain

Sir, As minister to a community that contains an Alexis, Hope and Yetta, and having recently rushed to tell the ooe Hiram that another of the same name had just moved into the area, may I point out that not all of John Titchhurst's list of names (January 3) have disappeared from use. Yours faithfully, JONATHAN A. ROMAIN, Maidenhead Synagogue, 9 Boys Hill Avenue, Maidenhead, Berkshire.

THE ARTS

Cinema

Attenborough shrewd enough to let well alone

A Chorus Line (PG) Odeon Leicester Square

Year of the Dragon (18) ABC Shaftesbury Avenue

Orion's Belt (15) Classics Chelsea, Tottenham Court Road

Peppermint Freedom (PG) Metro 1

Kurosawa retrospective Barbican

A Chorus Line is the longest-running and most profitable musical in the history of Broadway...

Love are all explored in turn, as each character does his self-psychoanalytical number.

In the decade since the film rights were sold, a number of potential directors gave up in face of the problems of adapting a musical...

In the event he has been clever enough not to try to be clever. He has left the stage-show where he found it, on the stage, a few brief backstage excursions hardly amount to "opening up"...

Much of the time Attenborough films a head-on procession view, and when the performers seem equal to it, uses long unbroken takes in the vocal numbers...

Technically, too, nothing has been left to chance. Faye Poliak has devised some remarkably erotic practice costumes. Ralph Burns's arrangements beef up the Marvin Hamlisch music...

excitement achieved in the big dance numbers.

Michael Cimino made a promising debut with Thunderbolt and Lightning, but when his second film, The Deer Hunter, had the dubious luck of winning five Oscars...

There is a lot of show in Year of the Dragon - a highly decorative studio-built New York Chinatown, set-pieces that include an interminable Chinese funeral and an unnecessary trip to South-East Asia...

The cinematographer Alex Thompson keeps his cameras nervously on the move, exploring Cimino's sets and set-pieces. In the end though it is the nicely judged



Banging the tongs: two elderly linguists come to the aid of Mickey Rourke in Year of the Dragon

opposition of the performances of Mickey Rourke and John Lone that keep the thing alive, at least until the plot gets too absurd.

Orion's Belt is Norway's Defence of the Realm, as an addition to the cool-looking cycle of films of political paranoia. It reflects less the current atmosphere of the Second Cold War than the permanent anxieties of those Scandinavian countries...

The central characters are a cheerful trio of nautical vagabonds, up to any trick to turn a small profit with their rusty old boat. They find a mass of copper cable on an uninhabited island; but find too late it leads to a Soviet listening post.

horror begins when the third man tries to tell his story to the Government, only to discover that Norway, as well as the Soviets, political interests demand that he be silenced.

The director Ola Solum has a keen sense of drama and suspense; he can make the disembarking of a bulldozer as gripping as the finely filmed helicopter attacks, and takes full advantage of the impressive Arctic scenery and fauna.

Marianne Rosebaum's Peppermint Freedom (a deliberate mispronunciation of the original German title, Peppermint Frieden - "Peppermint Peace") is a tale of a tormented little film. Shot in black and white that enhances the skilful evocation of the period, it is a German child's

view of the first years of a peace which - with the Cold War, Korea and nuclear armament - seems more frightening than the war just ended. Much of the film is concerned with the nightmares of the imaginative Marianne (a marvellous first-time child actor, Saskia Tyroller); the surreal atmosphere explains the chronological oddity of the child's apparently unchanging age between Germany's Russian campaign and Korea.

Loodoo's outstanding cinema event is the retrospective of the work of Akira Kurosawa, presented in collaboration with the Japan Foundation as part of the Barbican Centre's Japanese Festival. Kurosawa must own rank as the greatest living and working film artist; and the two-week retrospective presents his entire work from his first film, Sanshiro Sugata, to his most recent, the monumental Ran, a Japanese

Leav, which will officially open in London in March. Only the trade union-produced propaganda film, Those Who Make Tomorrow, to which Kurosawa briefly contributed but which he subsequently repudiated adamantly, has been excluded. It is now even possible to see Judo Saga II (1945), for many years believed to be lost.

This picture was a sequel to Kurosawa's debut film, Judo Saga (Sanshiro Sugata, 1943), a major rediscovery of the present retrospective. The film was itself lost, and the negative was only restored and reconstructed in 1952. Lacunae in the action are oob bridged by (needlessly) long titles; and at least one line of action vanishes halfway through the film. Even so we can recognize Kurosawa, in this very first work, as an artist not like the others.

David Robinson

Theatre

Superb adaptation

Les Liaisons dangereuses The Pit

A second viewing of this piece - first seen in Stratford last September - confirms its place among those few dramatizations of novels that rank equal with their sources.

The word "faithful" is usually involved in this context, and for what it is worth, Christopher Hampton's text does faithfully deliver Choderlos de Laclos's story of how two arch-intriguers conspire in the seductions of a married woman and a girl aged 15.

Brief by the usual standards of eighteenth-century epistolary novels, Les Liaisons dangereuses still runs to some 400 pages; and, although practically every letter in the book manages to advance the plot, its pace is leisurely and digressive.

In Hampton's version, with nothing essential omitted and only one crucial change in the events, it has been wound up to the tension of a tightly coiled spring. Also, where Laclos's ingenuity went on keeping his characters apart so as to give them the pretext for writing, Hampton exerts corresponding skill in bringing them together - complete with episodes of caecdropping and embarrassing discoveries.

This, in turn, entails the task of devising an appropriate idiom from a graciously literary book - signally lacking in dialogue. Hampton's solution here is to opt for a timeless style in which phrases from the letters can combine with modern speech, to present - as in Laclos - the portrait of a highly formal society where any coquettish scheming, or cold-blooded cruelty can flourish provided it is discussed in the most unspecifically civilized language.

In its original form, the story's central metaphor, of the assault on sexual virtue in terms of military campaigning, is strictly confined to the eighteenth century. Hampton's text releases it into wider currency without any loss in narrative excitement.

Above all, it preserves the mesmeric power of the two schemers - the Marquise de Merteuil and the Vicomte de Valmont. Former lovers, now linked in an unholy partnership of sexual corruption and revenge, they and their actions invite the reader to recoil in horror. But to watch them to action is to succumb to a state of entranced interest.

First there is the fascination of seeing two total professionals in action, playing a ruthless game to their own perverse but severe rules. Then there is the gradual realization that they are unequally matched. The Vicomte is simply a veteran and immensely skilled libertine. The Marquise, hardened by marriage and armed with copious learning, is by far the stronger.

Her mission to dominate and avenge has the strength of a philosophy; feminist despite the damage she delights in inflicting on women. And, as the play develops, it gradually emerges

that the Vicomte is simply her most effective instrument and her chief victim. At her behest, he seduces young Cecile (Lesley Maeville making a veriginous change from virgin ignorance to delighted corruption); again under her orders, he casts off his beloved Presidente de Tourvel - only to lose interest in life and die willingly in a duel. The irony, pressed to the limit in Howard Davies's production, is that the intriguer has himself been ambushed by his own heart.

Hampton's alteration is to deprive the Marquise from smallpox only to deliver her to the guillotine. However, the revolutionary rumblings that punctuated the Stratford production have been muted; and atmosphere is dictated mainly by Inoa Scakez's discordant pastiche Couperin on an amplified harpsichord - which spreads the sense of plangent desolation, even under the most uproariously improper episodes, such as the sight of Valmont writing to his beloved on the back of a naked courtesan who, he later claims, "sometimes" does scurrilous work for me.

Of Alan Rickman's Valmont, one can only say that he was born to play the part: in its reptilian voluptuousness, its weary exhaustion, and its bursts of brutish energy, over more spellbinding than in his sleepwalking advance on to Danceny's sword. Lioday Duncan's Marquise, facing her adversaries and dupes with a level, challenging gaze and a mocking drawl, would exert steely authority even without the help of the Watteau silks she wears like a suit of armour. Juliet Stevenson cuts through the surrounding style, subterfuge, with direct feeling and unbearable pain.

Indeed, only in the first movement of the Shostakovich did one sometimes feel that a sharper response was required of him, although there was plenty of passion and bite to be heard from his colleagues. The fiery cut and thrust in the Scherzo was unanimous, however, while the sustained tragic expression of the Largo had admirable breadth as well as an instinctive sense of momentum. I liked, too, the wily mioute rhythmic anticipations of the finale, which helped give it just the right degree of macabre grotesqueness.

If anything, the Ives was yet more impressive. The glorious cacophony of the movement Ives called "TSIAJ" ("This



Alan Rickman: born to play the part

the power to blow up the world but not to ask for scrambled eggs?" The script of Anthony Jay and Jonathan Lynn achieves its effects by the time-honoured method of pitting the princess with the pea, the great design with the little things that ruin it (how for instance the emergency hot-line to the Kremlin is answered by a telephonist who does not speak English).

No more perfect embodiment can there be of the "spineless fudge" which characterizes the British disease than Prime Minister Jim Hacker. Yes, Prime Minister (BBC2) began its new series hilariously with Hacker, three days into his administration, attempting to cancel Trident and hire a cook.

Both tasks prove tricky. "I have

Television The British disease

Unlike her European colleagues, Britain has rarely undergone a political revolution. "George III did not have his head cut off - he just went off it." Nor does British socialism offer any solution, jerrybuilt as it is on the old order - an order which means if people make moody by doing something it will be taken away, but if they sit still on property they will make and keep a fortune.

So, with only one jump-cut and pepping his thesis with bizarre parallels, did the Oxford Professor of Modern History

Concerts

Scherzo is a joke" sounded every hit as colourfully chaotic as its obvious close relative, the Scherzo of the Fourth Symphony, while the warm humility of the finale, full of Ives's willfully wayward harmonic imprints, was here confident, and thus compelling and moving.

Also in this concert, the soprano Tracey Chadwell sang John McCabe's Requiem Sequence (1971) with rare accuracy, using her pure yet expressive voice and a commanding stage presence to

PLG Young Artists Purcell Room

At the mid-point of this year's Park Lane Group Young Artists and Twentieth Century Music series the remarkable standard of performance shows no sign of flagging. But of the three partnerships heard on Wednesday one was obviously outstanding, and for a simple reason. The Lisney Piano Trio tackled two bold works, the Shostakovich and Ives Piano Trios, in a bold manner, proving that in music as in so much else he who dares often wins. Moreover it disturbed the violinist Rebecca Hirsch and the cellist Caroline Dearnley not one bit that their usual pianist, the unfortunate James Lisney, was indisposed. Nor should it have done when they were able to summon as substitute the talented John Lenahan.

Indeed, only in the first movement of the Shostakovich did one sometimes feel that a sharper response was required of him, although there was plenty of passion and bite to be heard from his colleagues. The fiery cut and thrust in the Scherzo was unanimous, however, while the sustained tragic expression of the Largo had admirable breadth as well as an instinctive sense of momentum. I liked, too, the wily mioute rhythmic anticipations of the finale, which helped give it just the right degree of macabre grotesqueness.

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Clarinettist Duncan Prescott

showed technical brilliance and an ability to call at will upon the widest extremes of his instrument's character, as was required in Prialux Rainer's Suite. A pity that his programme was otherwise slightly odd; York Bowen's Sonata is lovingly crafted but sounds like Brahms watered down by English pastoralism while Morris Per's Luminos (1972) had its effective moments but lasted too long. Scott Mitchell was the excellent pianist.

In the early evening recital

Contemporary Music Network new music on tour CAPRICORN Anthony Lamb Clarinet, Jonathan Williams Horn, Elizabeth Layton Violin, Susie Clarke Viola, Paul Silverstone Violoncello, Timothy Simpson Cello, Jonathan Josephson Piano

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT: CHANGE OF CONDUCTOR Royal Albert Hall 16 January, 7.30pm VERDI REQUIEM FOR MEXICO in the presence of TRH The Prince and Princess of Wales We regret to announce that owing to indisposition Placido Domingo will be replaced by Sir Charles Mackerras

PRIDE & PREJUDICE A play adapted from Jane Austen's novel by David Pownall! PETER SALLIS PAULINE YATES JAMES WARWICK TESSA PEAKE-JONES IAN GELDER IRENE SUTCLIFFE Directed by Bill Pryde Designed by Poppy Mitchell 28 January - 8 March THE OLD VIC

DELTA AIR LINES AMOROSO PURCELL ROOM SOUTH BANK SUNDAY, JAN. 12, '86 7.00 pm Jacqueline Hartley - violin, Rügen Gönner - viola, Mark Jackson - cello, Robert Hill - clarinet, Amanda Hurton - piano. Piano Quartet Opus 8, C.M. von Weber Trio for Clarinet, Viola and Piano, Aubrey Meyer (first performance) Three Madrigals for Violin and Viola, R. Martin: Trio for Clarinet, Viola and Piano (Kopelstatt), W.A. Mozart

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Shares plummet

ACCOUNT DAYS: Dealings Began, Dec 23. Dealings End, Today. Contango Day, Jan 13. Settlement Day, Jan 20. Forward bargains are permitted on two previous days.

THE TIMES Portfolio

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Table with columns: High, Low, Company, Price, Chgs, Div, Yield, P/E. Cinemas and TV.

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Table with columns: High, Low, Company, Price, Chgs, Div, Yield, P/E. Industrials A-D.

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Table listing companies in Building and Roads sector with price, change, and other metrics.

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Table listing companies in Foods sector with price, change, and other metrics.

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Table listing companies in Electricals sector with price, change, and other metrics.

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Table listing companies in Chemicals and Plastics sector with price, change, and other metrics.

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Table listing companies in Cinemas and TV sector with price, change, and other metrics.

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Table listing companies in Industrials A-D sector with price, change, and other metrics.

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Table listing companies in Industrials L-R sector with price, change, and other metrics.

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Table listing companies in Shoes and Leather sector with price, change, and other metrics.

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Table listing motors and aircraft companies.

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Table listing textiles companies and their products.

Vertical text on the right edge of the page, including 'Exec', 'ANOL', and 'Real s'.

FINANCE AND INDUSTRY

Executive Editor Kenneth Fleet

Another cheery start but will it last?

This time last year the ritual pre-Budget... another cheery start but will it last?

This weekend roughly the same team is assembling again at Chevening for a new year trol round the configuration of the March Budget.

Base rates, which went up one point yesterday to 12 1/2 per cent, had occasionally to be up, just as now and then they came down.

Looking at the jobless figures, workers only have themselves to blame for pricing themselves out of work.

But will the general weekend merriment grind to a halt yet again this year? Judging by yesterday's performance, money and bond markets are increasingly disenchanted.

Money market rates opened sharply higher and three-month interbank was offered at around 13 1/4 per cent, almost presaging a further one point rise in base rates.

But the gilt market fell apart again yesterday. Index-linked stocks for example dropped nearly a point during the worst of the battling.

Can the gilt market expect any help from New York. On Wednesday, bond prices fell by 1 1/2 points on news that US non-farm payrolls rose by 320,000 in December.

As the US Bond market continued its collapse yesterday, Dr Kaufman offered The Times a more or less complete recantation of his pre-Christmas views.

On some issues the accountancy profession has been backward in coming forward, but on the question of supervision its reluctance to accept the proposals is based on the practicalities of such a role.

Instead of a vague suggestion that the auditors might monitor client behaviour and report any dubious incidents or transactions to the supervisory authorities the institute believes that attention should focus more specifically on more effective auditing practices and a clear definition of the duties of directors to establish and maintain adequate systems of control.

No referral and the Argylls march to war

The gloves are off in the bitter £1.9 billion Argyll-Distillers takeover fight.

along with the Office of Fair Trading's recommendation and would not be referring the bid to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission.

Mr Brittan's decision is a blow to Distillers, which was pinning considerable hope on the six-month breathing space that a Monopolies probe would have given its besieged directors.

Now they have until February 15 at the latest, the offer's 60th day, to convince their shareholders that they should be given a new lease of life.

The offer closes for a second time on January 28. The 39th day, after which Distillers is barred from releasing fresh financial details of its defence, is on January 25 and the 46th day, after which Argyle is not allowed to raise its offer except in the event of a counter bid, is on February 1.

Distillers was putting a brave face on Mr Brittan's decision yesterday, saying that its defence plans had been laid on the basis that there would be no reference. The main plank of the public defence will include forecasts of profits for the year to the end of March of not less than £300 million, against £236.2 million last time and a probable 20 per cent-plus rise in the dividend.

Distillers will also stress the diversification plans it is formulating, to meet ambitious future growth targets. Despite impressive political support for a reference whipped up by GIW Government Relations, the political lobbying firm, there was never much of a case for a Monopolies investigation.

The audit watchdog threatens to bite

That faithful watchdog, the auditing profession, is threatening not just to bark but bite back at the Government's plans for the role of the auditors in regulating the financial services sector.

The Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales revealed yesterday that the time has come to set the Government's mind straight about the distinction between what is theoretically desirable and what is actually practical. The institute acknowledges that the auditors' role in the prevention of fraud is important. It accepts that the auditor could make a more positive contribution even to the extent of shelving the long cherished principle of client confidentiality in favour of an element of whistle blowing.

To assume that the auditors can perform a supervisory role under vaguely drafted legislation is misguided and not only fails to acknowledge the auditors' strength as reviewers of historical information but also fails to accept weaknesses in a current auditing regime which does not spell out clearly enough the responsibility for directors to maintain appropriate accounting and reporting controls.

On some issues the accountancy profession has been backward in coming forward, but on the question of supervision its reluctance to accept the proposals is based on the practicalities of such a role.

Instead of a vague suggestion that the auditors might monitor client behaviour and report any dubious incidents or transactions to the supervisory authorities the institute believes that attention should focus more specifically on more effective auditing practices and a clear definition of the duties of directors to establish and maintain adequate systems of control.

That kind of system has worked within the insurance industry where special audited reports and statements have to be submitted to the Department of Trade.

If the Government insists on this extended supervisory role for the auditors all that will happen is that the individual firms will not accept the risk and simply turn down the business. They will deal only with the bluest chip clients leaving the gap for the less scrupulous accountants to fill.

Billions wiped off shares as world follows Wall St dive

By William Kay, City Editor

Billions of pounds were wiped off the world's stock markets yesterday after fears of an interest rate war.

The panic was sparked in New York on Wednesday when an unexpected fall in US unemployment led to speculation that the Reagan administration would have to maintain high interest rates to prevent the economy from overheating.

That produced a record fall of 39.1 in Wall Street's Dow Jones index. As stock markets opened yesterday, beginning in the Far East, the shock waves produced a domino effect.

By London's mtn, dealers decided that shares could go only one way. The FT-SE 100 share index opened 24.3 down at 1,379.9, and this was quickly mirrored by the 30-share index. Its first reading, at 10am,

showed a drop of 16 to 1,107.8. There was a recovery in the next hour, but then the market was rocked by Mr Michael Heseltine's resignation.

The panic was mirrored in New York on Wednesday when an unexpected fall in US unemployment led to speculation that the Reagan administration would have to maintain high interest rates to prevent the economy from overheating.

That produced a record fall of 39.1 in Wall Street's Dow Jones index. As stock markets opened yesterday, beginning in the Far East, the shock waves produced a domino effect.

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another 13 points down to 1,513 by late morning.

Nerves were stretched by rumours in New York that Arab foreign ministers, meeting in Fez, might liquidate dollar holdings in retaliation against America's Libyan sanctions.

The outlook on Wall Street is for continued erratic swings, according to a Times survey of money managers there.

The pound held its ground well following Wednesday's rise in base rates, although it was helped by market suggestions that rates may have to rise again. It gained 60 points to \$1.490 against the dollar.

The pound initially rose sharply against the German mark, trading at DM3.57 during the morning. It later fell back to DM3.525, still more than 1/2

picking up on the day, as dollar selling boosted the mark.

The sterling index rose 0.3 to 78.2, after reaching 78.4 during the morning.

In New York last night, the pound rose further to \$1.4580.

London money market conditions remained volatile and nervous. The three-month interbank rate moved half a point to 13 1/4 per cent in early trading, before settling back to 13 1/2 per cent.

Money market traders said the possibility of another UK base rate increase remained.

There was a record volume on the London International Financial Futures Exchange. All the major contracts had their heaviest trading to date, giving a total market volume of about 40,000 contracts.

IN BRIEF

Group sells UK property

Burnett & Hallamshire, the hard-pressed coal mining to property group, has disposed of the last of its British properties for £1.9 million cash to Hartley Property Trust. The company still has development properties in California, but aims to sell all but one of them.

Burnett has sold all its British development properties for about £5 million, or close to their book value, since March.

Shareholders will vote on Monday on a financial rescue package designed to save the company from the receiver. The plan is to convert £63 million of bank borrowings to equity, raise £30 million by a share issue to shareholders, and convert £33 million of bank debt to convertible preference shares.

Beazer wins Kier control

C. H. Beazer, the house-builder, has clinched its eight-week takeover battle for control of French Kier, the construction group.

Acceptances from holders of less than 6 per cent of the shares in its new increased £160 million offer were enough to take its total shareholding over the 51 per cent mark.

Stock market report, page 17

BP Oil is to leave its offices in Central London and Hemeel Hempstead, and combine its British operations in a new head office at Hemeel Hempstead. The building, expected to be ready in late 1988, will bring savings of £4.5 million a year.

Rates cut

Internationally-agreed official interest rates for export credit will be cut by 1.05 percentage points from Wednesday. Rates for credits of 2-5 years will be: rich countries 10.95 per cent; intermediate countries 9.65 per cent; poor countries, 8.8 per cent. Rates for credits of more than five years will be 11.2 per cent, 10.55 per cent, and 8.8 per cent respectively.

Rentals rise

Electronic Rentals Group, which owns Visionhire, increased profits from £7.49 million to £7.74 million before tax in the six months to September 30. Turnover was up from £97 million to £104 million and the interim dividend is unchanged at 1.2p.

Rolls director

Rolls-Royce has appointed Sir Philip Sclibourne, chairman of Britoil, a non-executive director. Mr Peter Molony has resigned from the board on leaving the company.

Philips sales up

Sales of Philips, the Dutch electrical group, rose to nearly £160 billion (£15 billion) last year from £153 billion in 1984, but net profits were lower than £1.1 billion in 1984. The exact figures for the latest year were not available.

Inmos may be sold to foreign company

By Ian Griffiths

Britain's microchip technology could fall into foreign ownership this year when Thorn EMI sells off all or part of its troubled Inmos subsidiary.

Thorn EMI's chairman, Sir Graham Wilson, said yesterday that he had held discussions with several international companies about a possible partnership, none of which was British.

He said: "We are looking on a world-wide basis, but the likely partner is almost certainly not going to be British."

Sir Graham did not rule out a withdrawal from the business, although Thorn would prefer to retain a controlling interest in Inmos. He was unconcerned about any political repercussions of such a move since his responsibility was to his shareholders, he said later.

Thorn owns about 95 per cent of Inmos, which is valued at £115 million. That included £95 million paid to the Government for its 76 per cent stake in July 1984.

One of the attractions of that deal for the Government was that it ensured that Inmos would remain British-controlled.

Since Thorn took control, Inmos has suffered a series of financial setbacks as a result of the world's decline in the microchip industry.

In the half-year to September 30, Inmos made a loss before interest of £12.5 million, compared with a £2.6 million profit a year earlier. It is still not breaking even on a day-to-day basis and is not expected to do so until June.

Once this breakeven position has been achieved, Thorn will step up its share disposal plans.

Thorn has rejected the idea of going it alone with Inmos since the cash requirements for developing and expanding the business are too high.

The problems at Inmos have hit Thorn hard and yesterday it reported a fall in interim pretax profits to £11.4 million from £40.2 million on sales of £1,533 million up from £1,436 million.

However, the company maintained its 5p interim dividend.

Tempus, page 17

Unemployment breaks trend with increase of 14,700

By David Smith, Economics Correspondent

Adult unemployment rose by 14,700 to 3,181,500 last month, against the favourable trend of the previous three months. The rate of unemployment rose from 13.1 to 13.2 per cent.

The rise was the biggest monthly increase since last April. Lord Young of Grafham, Secretary of State for Employment, said it was disappointing.

But the Department of Employment officials do not believe the December rise heralds a new upturn in the jobless total.

Lord Young said: "In the last six months there has been little change in the level of unemployment and it still appears that the trend is broadly flat."

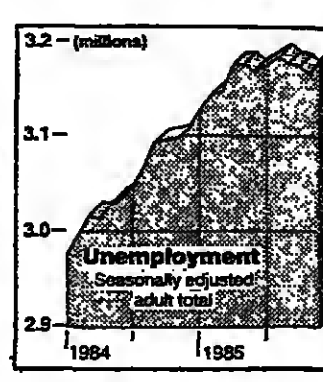
The December unemployment count was in line with normal seasonal patterns. This would produce a record unemployment level.

At the end of November, 495,000 people were kept off the unemployment register by the Government's special employment and training measures, the same as a month earlier.

Critics of the Government attacked the first adult unemployment increase in four months.

Mr John Prescott, Labour's Employment spokesman, said: "These are the highest December unemployment figures ever recorded... Britain starts 1986 with the highest interest, unemployment and inflation rates of our major competitors. Even the resignation of Cabinet ministers cannot disguise this deplorable record."

For the SDP, Mr Ian Wigglesworth, MP, spokesman on economic and industrial affairs, said: "These figures show that the Government's economic policy is in ruins."



Lord Young: Little change in level

Debt deadlock remains after Nigerian talks

By Richard Thomson, Banking Correspondent

Nigeria is still refusing to repay any of the £100 million in loans outstanding to Johnson Matthey Bankers until all fraud investigations relating to the loans are complete, despite a conciliatory meeting yesterday between Professor Bolaji Akinyemi, the Nigerian external affairs minister, and the Bank of England.

Mr Robin Leigh-Pemberton, Governor of the Bank, emphasized at the meeting that most of the JMB loans were not fraudulent, in an attempt to persuade Nigeria not to use the issue as an excuse for avoiding debt repayments.

The Bank is anxious to secure repayment for the loans as soon as possible to smooth the way towards selling off JMB to the private sector this year.

The meeting with Prof Akinyemi ended with a reaffirmation by the Bank and Prof Akinyemi of the need for cooperation between the authorities in England and Nigeria to sort out the fraudulent loans.

Since the near-collapse of JMB in 1984 the Bank which took over the running of the bank has reduced the Nigerian loan book from about £120 million to £100 million. This is proportionately a much higher amount than with other British banks. But it also discovered that some of the loans were fraudulent.

Although the Bank has been cooperating with the Nigerian police since the middle of last year to uncover the full nature and extent of the fraud, the central bank of Nigeria is refusing to repay any of the loans.

Nigeria owes \$7 billion to British companies and the Export Credits Guarantee Department.

Ministers to debate scheme for medium-term tax cuts

By Our Economics Correspondent

Treasury ministers will be holding talks on a medium-term programme of tax reductions, focussing on income tax, this week.

The raising of base rates this week has not, Treasury officials believe, removed the scope for tax cuts in the March Budget.

Mr Nigel Lawson, the Chancellor, and his ministers will decide the broad outline of the Budget. The weekend meeting, held annually at Chevening, Kent, became the focus of considerable attention last January, occurring as it did when the sterling crisis was at its height.

This time the Government's swift action on interest rates has boosted the pound, while Mr Michael Heseltine's resignation

from the Cabinet has diverted attention away from Budget-planning even if it may have added to financial pressures.

The scope for tax cuts in the budget, barring a collapse of oil prices below \$23-\$23 a barrel, is about £2 billion. Yesterday, Brent crude for immediate delivery was \$25.20 a barrel, and for March delivery, \$22.85.

The Chancellor is believed to favour concentrating on reducing the basic rate of income tax by 1p to 7p in the pound, as part of a programme to cut the rate to 25p in the pound.

Although there are clear political attractions in doing this, it also fits in with Treasury, long-term plans for personal tax reforms.

A green paper on personal

taxation will be published, probably on Budget Day itself, which will propose a system of transferable allowances ending, the Chancellor believes, the discrimination against non-working wives.

Switching to this system, which will not be possible until the end of the decade, will be comparatively painless if, in the intervening years, the basic rate has been cut to 25p in the pound.

Treasury ministers are unlikely to opt for a lower public sector borrowing requirement in 1986/87 than the £7.5 billion contained in present plans, in order to reassure the financial markets at the time of the Budget.

Elders 'determined' to continue Allied fight

By Patience Wheatcroft

Mr John Elliott, the chairman of Elders IXL, said yesterday that his company is determined to proceed with its battle for Allied-Lyons despite the delay caused by a Monopolies Commission investigation.

Mr Elliott returns to Australia today after a brief visit to London to supervise the progress of the £1.8 billion bid.

Elders has compiled a 350-page submission to the Monopolies Commission which details its own business, its plans for Allied and the intricate mechanism with which it intends to fund its proposed takeover.

It was this convoluted chain of Turks & Caicos Islands companies which raised questions in the City.

Mr Elliott says that there are no significant changes in his funding arrangements.

Replying to suggestions that Elders might turn its attention from Allied-Lyons to Courage, part of the Imperial Group under attack from Hanson Trust, Mr Elliott said that he looked at Courage some time ago and opted instead for Allied. "However, we are determined to get into the brewing business in Britain", he said.

Rival says Expressway plan could double in cost

By Jeremy Warner, Business Correspondent

Channel Expressway's £2.1 billion scheme for a four-bore rail and road tunnel under the Channel has been criticised in a seven-point letter to the Government from EuroRoute, a rival contender.

EuroRoute's £4.7 billion bridge and tunnel scheme is the only other of the four fixed link proposals that meets British demands for both a road and rail crossing.

The letter was sent after a number of reports suggesting that the British Government favoured the Channel Expressway option and arrived in time for yesterday's expected Cabinet discussion of the fixed link project.

EuroRoute said Expressway's scheme, first published in October 1985 and substantially modified two weeks later, had

not been through public consultation required by government guidelines for a link.

It said the real cost of Expressway's scheme might be more than double Expressway's estimate of £2.1 billion and the ventilation proposed in the road tunnel would not be sufficient.

A 31-mile road tunnel with no exits posed untried safety problems. It was not certain that the scheme's proposal for four bored tunnels would be geologically feasible, EuroRoute claimed.

The letter also questioned whether Channel Expressway could complete the link by 1991 as promised, whether the scheme could cope with expected growth in traffic levels, and whether drivers could cope psychologically with a 30-mile drive through tunnel.

MARKET SUMMARY

Table with columns: STOCK MARKETS, MAIN PRICE CHANGES, CURRENCIES, INTEREST RATES. Lists various market indices and prices.

79% profit rise at Associated Newspapers

By Graham Searjeant

Drastics cuts in the losses of the Mail on Sunday helped Lord Rothermere's Associated Newspapers raise its profits by 79 per cent to £41.9 million pretax for the year to September.

A three-for-one scrip issue and better than expected dividend rise sent Associated shares up 45p to 970p yesterday.

Most of the improvement came from the group's newspaper and magazine division, which raised its profit from £6.7 million to £10.6 million.

Profits from oil fell from £9 million to £6.8 million but the new Esmond, Forbes and Gordon combined gasfield, in which the group as a 12.5 per cent interest, is now ready to produce fully on contract to British Gas.

National Westminster Bank PLC advertisement. NatWest announces that with effect from Thursday, 9th January, 1986, its Base Rate is increased from 11.50% to 12.50% per annum. All facilities (including regulated consumer credit agreements) with a rate of interest linked to NatWest Base Rate will be varied accordingly. 41 Lothbury London EC2P 2BP

WALL STREET

Early drop for Dow

New York (agencies) - Wall Street prices stabilized at lower levels as heavy trading early yesterday - one day after the Dow Jones industrial average suffered its biggest single-day loss in history.

It was down 0.56 to 1520.64, after being down by 12.73 a quarter of an hour after the market opened.

Declines led advances 1,252 by 398 among the 1,865 issues crossing the tape.

Volume rose to about 61.77 million shares, compared with 54.92 million in the same period on Wednesday.

Bond market weakness put pressure on prices, analysts said. "The bond market has had a very significant reversal and the stock market is taking its cue from that," said Mr. Edward Nicolski of Piper, Jeffrey and Hoopwood in Minneapolis.

As on Wednesday, the market's weakness was aggravated by futures-related sell programmes.

Beatrice Cos was the most active issue off 1-8 to 43 1/8. AT and T followed, off 1-2 to 23 7/8. IBM was third, up 1-4 to 149 1/8.

Kodak fell 1-7/8 to 46 1/8, but Polaroid was up 5-7/8 to 49 1/8. Schering rose by 1-3/4 to 52 1/8. Its new oral medicine is said to have been successfully tested.

A day of record trading on the London International Financial Futures Exchange yesterday

was matched by some brisk precious metals business, but most softs were less active and metals were dull.

LONDON COMMODITY EXCHANGE Rubber in p per kilo Soyabean meal, coffee and cocoa in p per tonne

Gold reached \$337, but coffee suffered a setback in early trading, chiefly on profit-taking.

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FOREIGN EXCHANGES

The close of a day of thin trading yesterday saw the pound against the dollar, at 1.4490 (1.4430), but having lost most of its early gains in terms of the mark.

After approaching 3.57 to the mark, sterling closed at 3.5425, against 3.5360.

The 100-day Euro-weighted index, after a high of 78.4, ended at 78.2 from 77.9 at the previous close.

Dealers said there was concern that Wednesday's base rate rise of 1 per cent would not be enough to bring sterling at its current levels, particularly in terms of the Continental, given the pound's continued vulnerability to oil price falls.

The decision by Egypt to cut the price of its crude oil had little impact, however, with North Sea prices seen as holding up well.

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STERLING SPOT AND FORWARD RATES

Table with columns for Market rates, Spot rates, and Forward rates for various currencies including New York, London, and others.

OTHER STERLING RATES

Table listing other sterling rates for various countries and currencies.

DOLLAR SPOT RATES

Table listing dollar spot rates for various currencies.

BALANCE OF PAYMENTS

Table showing balance of payments data for various countries.

FINANCIAL TRUSTS

Table listing financial trusts and their performance.

INVESTMENT TRUSTS

Table listing investment trusts and their performance.

EURO CURRENCY DEPOSITS

Table listing Euro currency deposit rates for various banks.

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Table listing sterling certificate of deposit (CD) rates.

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STOCK MARKET REPORT

Shares in ragged retreat and indexes take a tumble

By Derek Pain and Cliff Feltham

Equities... and government stocks were in ragged retreat yesterday. Prices were marked down sharply over a wide front with many investors baffled and bewildered by the dramatic swing in sentiment.

On Friday, the market, as measured by the FT 30 share index, reached a new trading peak. Yesterday, with signs of panic selling, the index was down 17.1 at 1,106.1 point - its biggest fall since early December. At one time it was down 21 points.

According to Datastream calculations the slump wiped more than £4.2 billion from market values.

The FT 30 share index which embraces 100 shares, slumped 24.6 points to 1,378.6 points, one of the biggest falls on record. Shares made several unsuccessful attempts to rally during the day but each time prices peaked up, the recovery was crushed by fresh waves of selling.

Government stocks, at one time down as much as 1 1/2%, did sustain a rally, finishing with falls of up to 1/4%.

The 10 per cent base rate increase may not be enough to defend sterling, some market men believe. With Wall Street's strength suddenly ebbing away and growing worries about oil prices, the market was ill-prepared for the resignation of Mr. Michael Heseltine as defence secretary over the Westland wrangle.

Westland, ironically, was one of the few shares to fly against the trend. The shares slumped 18p to 96p as a large block, believed to be 4.4 million, went through the market at prices said to be in the 109p to 112p region. Rumours circulated that one of the rival consortiums - Mr Alan Bristow, who mounted a bid for Westland last year - were stake building to increase their voting power at next week's shareholders' meeting.

But few leaders escaped the

bloodbath. Minus signs extended into double figures although a few of the hard hit shares managed to struggle off their low points.

Distillers Co, on the clearance of the Argyll Group bid, achieved a 21p gain at 326p. Another FT 30 constituent, which helped cushion the index

Guinness's traditional dominance of the British stout market is under attack from Rothmans International, the tobacco group, and Heineken, the Dutch brewing group. A number of regional breweries are selling Beamish Irish stout (brewed by Beamish & Crawford of Cork, a Rothmans subsidiary) and in some cases draught Guinness has been removed from pubs. Murphy's stout, also brewed at Cork and backed by Heineken, is being pushed increasingly. Guinness, which last year improved its draught stout sales by 6 per cent, fell 4p to 299p yesterday.

Guinness's traditional dominance of the British stout market is under attack from Rothmans International, the tobacco group, and Heineken, the Dutch brewing group. A number of regional breweries are selling Beamish Irish stout (brewed by Beamish & Crawford of Cork, a Rothmans subsidiary) and in some cases draught Guinness has been removed from pubs. Murphy's stout, also brewed at Cork and backed by Heineken, is being pushed increasingly. Guinness, which last year improved its draught stout sales by 6 per cent, fell 4p to 299p yesterday.

fall was Thorn EMI, up 8p to 417p on its interim figures and subsequent analysts' meeting.

Mr Robert Holmes a Court, the Australian entrepreneur who once had about 4 per cent of the group, has reduced his stake to a near nominal 110,000 shares.

Horizon Travel, where the Bass brewing group has 29 per cent, was unchanged at 100p as Australian based financier Mr. Rob Brierley disclosed a 5.3 per cent stake building. He has been stake building for about three months. Grand Metropolitan has about 4 per cent of the equity.

A few regional breweries strengthened by takeover hopes, strengthened by the Distillers bid clearance. Vanx Breweries rose a further 18p to 385p. But Whitbread, at rumours circulated of more problems on its American side, fell 9p to 240p.

Insurances were hard hit. General Accident, which for the second time in three months is increasing its car insurance rates by about 6 per cent, fell 13p to 710p. Banks shaded a few

peppers. Ahead of figures due next week The Body Shop International fell 30p to 778p and

Holdings bid hopes, rising 3p to 223p.

Floyd Oil, which has £4 million in the bank, has encountered oil in three more East Midlands wells. The shares were unchanged at 53p.

Food manufacturers were left looking slimmer after the sector came on for selling pressure. Avana was 7p down at 572p with Berrifords coming back 8p to 149p. Elsewhere Cadbury-Schwepes, also suffering from falling bid hopes, gave up 4p at 149p. Dalrymple was marked 10p lower to 220p. Northern Foods surrendered 8p to 276p.

A broker's caution on Julian's, the discotheque operators which has warned of a profit setback this year, prompted a 5p markdown in the price at 66p.

Combined Technologies Corporation, which is engaged in a number of speculative high-tech ventures, held steady at 11p after Tournesol, the Bermuda-based company, increased its stake to 9.5 per cent. Tournesol is controlled by Mr James Longcroft, the oil magnate who is also chairman of Combined Technologies.

C. H. Seizer, the housebuilder, hauled up the victory flag after finally achieving control of

Bespak lost a further 6p to 100p on further consideration of its profits warning.

Associated Newspapers rose 45p to 970p on its results. The related Daily Mail & General Trust A shares improved 100p to £13.50p.

Unigate, the food group, continued to reflect Hillsdown

French Kier, the construction group. Acceptances coupled with shares picked up on the market enabled Beazer shares were 4p off at 462p while French Kier closed at 282p, down 1p on the day.

Geal Petroleum leaped 10p to 50p in oils after leading shareholders - Morgan Grenfell and Energy Recovery Investment Corporation - unveiled plans to sell their 41 per cent holding thereby posing the possibility of full takeover.

Plans by Egypt to cut the price of its crude oil unsettled the sector. BP fell 8p to 540p while British came 2p off the top at 198p. Burnmah lost some ground before recovery unchanged at 285p. Tricentral made some headway before finishing 1p down at 130p.

Valis Pollex, the public relations group, has increased profits by 87 per cent to £1.1 million and could achieve £1.7 million this year after goodwill payments. Its broker James Capel & Co believe. There is a 2-for-one scrip issue. The shares fell 20p to 480p.

Meanwhile, one of VP's latest clients, the Stock Exchange, announced the launch of a communications programme about the big bang, more good news for VP.

Crystallite, the electronics group, went against the trend. The shares shot up 15p to 156p although they have fallen from 240p at one stage last year. The company has suffered from a severe squeeze on its profit margins as its big customer, British Telecom, settled down after privatization.

The company has also been hit by the death of its popular chairman Mr John Leworthy, who masterminded the takeover of the Royal Worcester fine china business. The possibility remains that some market men are looking to the prospect of a bid for Crystallite now that such a key boardroom figure has gone.

More than 20,000 bargains were transacted on the London Traded Options Market yesterday. The Distillers Co attracted 2,844 deals and Lornho 2,462, but the most active counter was the Stock Exchange Index. It accounted for 3,323 bargains, nearly equally split between calls and puts.

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GEC joins French to make low cost chips

By Bill Johnstone Technology Correspondent

GEC and the French electronics company, Thomson, have joined forces in a European collaboration to develop and manufacture cheap complex microchips.

The partnership, which will involve about 200 high-grade designers and technical staff, will begin immediately.

Mr Derek Roberts, joint deputy managing director (technical) at GEC, said: "We expect to get positive benefits over the next two to three years."

The project is the initiative of the French company. Talks began about three months ago.

Philips of Holland and Siemens of Germany were also invited to join. The invitation is still open to them but only GEC has accepted so far.

The collaboration is the

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Until the company has got its borrowings firmly under control, Thorn is bound to be hampered by the constraints of running the business for cash. Net borrowings at the half-year of £440.5 million were up by £14.6 million and will be, pre-disposals, at about £480 million mark at the year end.

There is no doubt that Thorn is attacking the cash problems, but the measures taken are a serious indictment of the past.

Given some of the creaking inefficiencies in the Thorn empire, it is remarkable that it has survived at all as a group making a profit. For instance, it did not know the profit margin made on individual television products, it had 350 trading subsidiaries in Britain alone; and it had six insurance brokers in France. These and other weaknesses are being dealt with but without the products and the marketing this work is not a cure. The most comforting indication of progress to date is the company's forecast of second-half trading profits about the same as last year.

Immos is still a source of some concern and much of the prospects for the technology division are tied to Thorn's ability to reduce its interest there. It cannot afford the cash investment which is needed to develop Immos and there must be some doubts about the wisdom of retaining any further interest in it.

Thorn shares had an erratic day, rising then falling before recovering again to close at

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Thorn EMI begins bridge building with the City

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RACING: WINTER'S STAR CHASER TO DEFY TOP WEIGHT IN ASCOT FEATURE

Talented Brown Chamberlin can underline Cup chance

Brown Chamberlin, who ran an outstanding race after a 20-month lay-off at Cheltenham last month, can put himself in the forefront of the Gold Cup picture by defying top weight in the Green Highlander Handicap Chase at Ascot today.

Two seasons ago, Brown Chamberlin was one of the leading chasers in the country, winning the Hennessy with 11st 8lb and winning home George and Burrough Hill Lad in the Gold Cup when both those horses were behind his leg trouble kept Fred Winter's star off the course for the whole of last season but he showed no signs of the problem when making a splendid reappearance at jumping's headquarters five weeks ago.

Despite looking understandably backward in condition, Brown Chamberlin jumped with great zest and strided with the much fitter Rum and Skip until approaching the last fence where lack of a recent outing began to tell. Close home, Brown Chamberlin forfeited second place to Elmboy, who, like Rum and Skip, was having his third race of the season.

The subsequent victories of Rum and Skip at Chesham and Chesham have shown that Brown Chamberlin was attempting the almost impossible in trying to concede 20lb to John Spearing's progressive young chaser, Knock Hill, a distant fourth at Cheltenham.

Western Sunset has a touch of class but has yet to win at the level of the Gold Cup in the last week but 16-1 is still available and with the race looking exceptionally open, that represents better value than those at the head of the market.

An authoritative victory today would see those odds halved and it is hoped to see him produce exactly that.

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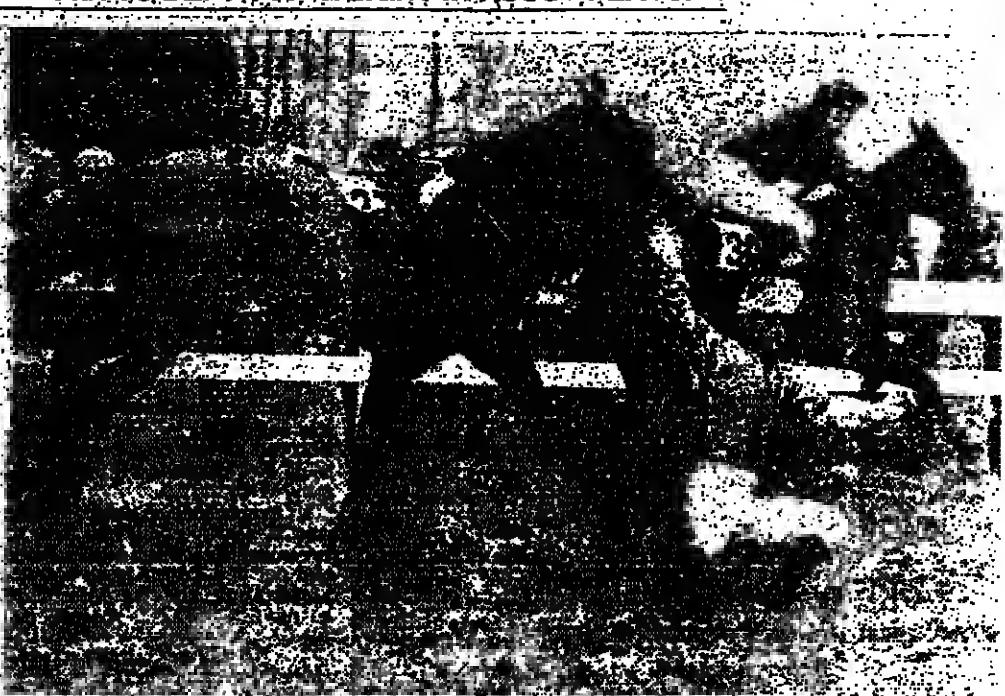
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Peter Corrigan and Courcheval part company after the last flight in the selling hurdle, won by Sweetest, at Wincanton yesterday (Photograph: Harry Kerr)

Burrough Hill Lad the surprise in Pitman's National package

Challenge Cup and extremely impressive he was, 100. After the "old monkey" as Mrs Pitman describes Macoliver, who has been a hard time messing about at the rear on the first circuit ("I'll take a super fit jockey to ride him at Aintree", Mrs Pitman said), he suddenly decided to gallop a bit and, shooting into a clear lead halfway round the final circuit, he stroled home well clear of a large field.

Macoliver's jumping could not be faulted and if gets the soft ground he needs at Aintree he could be a major force. For those who find 16-1 too cramped, more than double those odds, 33-1, can be obtained about this eight-year-old.

Mrs Pitman's other winner, Riva Rose, in the Novices' Hurdle, was equally impressive and could well be Cheltenham Festival material. His immediate objective, though, is to qualify for the Maiden Timber Novices' series.

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Way to Edinburgh and Stuttgart begins on a Shropshire track

British athletics has always defied logic. Some semblance of order emerges from the labyrinthine administration and class athletes continue to emerge from the westland.

Britain's athletics administration and class athletes continue to emerge from the westland. There is still no national athletics stadium. And it must be as galling to read as it is to write year after year that Britain's only full-scale indoor track, that is of 200 metres, was hardly fully appointed facilities around it is a converted hangar at RAF Cosford, on the eastern edge of Shropshire.

Yet, as in other areas of non-conformism, the British abroad their continental neighbours. Their close allies, the French, German and Italians, shook their heads in amazement as the British lifted three European indoor gold medals and five European junior gold medals last summer.

One of the Pitman Aintree quartet, Macoliver - the others are the 1983 winner, Corbiere, and Smith's Man - showed his paces in yesterday's Lillo Lunnh Challenge Cup and extremely impressive he was, 100. After the "old monkey" as Mrs Pitman describes Macoliver, who has been a hard time messing about at the rear on the first circuit ("I'll take a super fit jockey to ride him at Aintree", Mrs Pitman said), he suddenly decided to gallop a bit and, shooting into a clear lead halfway round the final circuit, he stroled home well clear of a large field.

Macoliver's jumping could not be faulted and if gets the soft ground he needs at Aintree he could be a major force. For those who find 16-1 too cramped, more than double those odds, 33-1, can be obtained about this eight-year-old.

Mrs Pitman's other winner, Riva Rose, in the Novices' Hurdle, was equally impressive and could well be Cheltenham Festival material. His immediate objective, though, is to qualify for the Maiden Timber Novices' series.

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Red Rum honoured

Philip Blacker has been commissioned by Seagram, the Grand National sponsors, to produce a life-size bronze of Red Rum, the only horse to have won the world's greatest steeplechase three times.

Blacker, the former National Hunt jockey now regarded as the leading exponent of horse bronzes, has already begun work on the project. It is planned to unveil the bronze at Aintree during the 1988 Grand National meeting, which commemorates the 150th anniversary of the Aintree race.

Ginger McCain, Red Rum's trainer, said: "I always hoped it would happen. Now it is going up, and in the right place. It is tremendous that such a fine craftsman as Blacker is to carry out the work. It is just what the old horse deserves and is a brilliant idea, especially as Rummy has just won the Aintree race."

Truly Rumsey, one of last season's leading two-year-olds, has been bought by Sheikh Mohammed in a private deal for an undisclosed figure.

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Berry set to impeach US precedent

A former Dallas Cowboys full back, Wali Garrison, was once asked by the majority of the press to have over completed their second leg of the Whitehead Round-the-World race, that there are likely to be changes to the course and in the event, concepts of winning and losing.

The current race is the fourth to be organised by the Royal Naval Sailing Association (RNSA) for Whitbread and is completely different from the first one in 1973/74. The fleet was made up of mainly production boats, though Galt Blyth and one or two others were specially built for the occasion. The outfit of the crews was of determination to get round safely without too much concern being given to results.

For the second race there was a subtle change in attitude. It was no longer the great adventure, everyone knew it could be done and the racing became fiercer. That year saw the first entry from Canada, Van Rietsteben in Flyer, the man and boat that probably had more to do with influencing the development of the race than any other factor, Van Rietsteben was the first of the big spenders, Flyer was, an old and bigger and better Flyer four years later.

Now the spending is in danger of getting out of hand, each of the six teams in the race has to be able to build and enter. While you cannot buy success, it must help to have the best. More to the point is that these days the race is more about the reach of any individual, even a Van Rietsteben, and they have to be sponsored. Naturally, sponsors need winners, so a new twist has been introduced this time for the first yacht to complete the course on elapsed time. It is bound to be won of the maxis, whereas the traditional handicap prizes, the Whitbread Trophy and the Volvo, are won by one of the better-sailed, smaller boats.

There is a real possibility of the first to finish trophy stealing all the thunder from the maxis in the present day. It is a pity that the maxis are so difficult to win handicap prize and thus deterring entries from smaller boats in future races. Also the spread of time between the first and last to finish is becoming wider as the larger boats become faster and regularly break the course records. Interest is any given leg tends to fade away by the time the last boat sails in.

The only way to correct this tendency on the present course would be to reduce the size of the boats, unlikely to be popular with the sponsors or their professional crews. The alternative to shorter boats is to shorten the course, giving perhaps six stages instead of the present four. This is one of the ideas being considered by Rear Admiral Charles Williams, chairman of the RNSA race committee. What is to go is the problem, there are not that many places equally spaced around the world that can handle a large fleet of large yachts.

Another thing the admirals would like to do is encourage more entries from countries that are poorly represented, particularly from Australia and the United States. He thinks this would be more likely, if the race was to be held in the race called as those countries.

Then there is the dilemma of Cape Town, so far, always the first stop after a leg of ideal length. It is unlikely that South Africa can ever see again the waves what will happen in that unhappy land within the next few years? It is believed that some potential entries for the present race failed to materialise because of the decision to visit South Africa.

Certainly there was no entry from the Royal Navy or Jolo services, always been competitors in the past. This was probably unavoidable, given Britain's official attitude, but it seemed unnecessary for Lord Trefagan of the Ministry of Defence to decline to call at the RNSA/Whitbread stand during a recent tour of the London Boat Show. It may be that the Africa continent will have to be avoided altogether next time; there seem to be no other suitable ports.

Another move to encourage the smaller boats might be to award class prizes for each leg and overall. At the moment they are given at the end of the race. It is believed that the Africa continent will have to be avoided altogether next time; there seem to be no other suitable ports.

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Market Rasen called off

Tomorrow's fixture at Market Rasen was called off because of snow and frost, but both the remaining meetings, Ascot and Newcastle, appear likely to go ahead.

Ascot, who race today, forecast the ground as good to soft, while Newcastle are very optimistic about their prospects for tomorrow. The going is expected to be soft.

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Brittan puts in a word for breeders

Leon Brittan, the Secretary of Trade and Industry, speaking at the Thoroughbred Breeders' Association annual lunch in London yesterday, said that there was now a good case for breeders being treated on a par with the rest of the agricultural industry.

After the luncheon the TBA breeders' awards were presented by the General Penfold, the chairman of the Horseracing Advisory Council. The Duke of Devonshire's special award to the person who, in the opinion of the council, has made a significant contribution to the British breeding industry was given to Jim Joel.

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YACHTING

Round the world on a new tack

Round the world on a new tack

Round the world on a new tack

Round the world on a new tack

Round the world on a new tack

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AMERICAN FOOTBALL

Berry set to impeach US precedent

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ASCOT

Going good to soft

1.0 SILVER DOCTOR NOVICE HURDLE (4-y-o; £2,225; 2m 4f) (11 runners)

101 11-11 MIM MAJED (P) (P) O'Donnell (P) 11-11 M. McInnes

102 11-11 MIM MAJED (P) (P) O'Donnell (P) 11-11 M. McInnes

103 11-11 MIM MAJED (P) (P) O'Donnell (P) 11-11 M. McInnes

104 11-11 MIM MAJED (P) (P) O'Donnell (P) 11-11 M. McInnes

105 11-11 MIM MAJED (P) (P) O'Donnell (P) 11-11 M. McInnes

106 11-11 MIM MAJED (P) (P) O'Donnell (P) 11-11 M. McInnes

107 11-11 MIM MAJED (P) (P) O'Donnell (P) 11-11 M. McInnes

ASCOT

Going good to soft

2.35 THUNDER AND LIGHTNING NOVICE CHASE (26,147; 2m) (3)

402 6-11111 CHARONAL WALLY (C) (P) (P) 6-11111 M. McInnes

403 6-11111 CHARONAL WALLY (C) (P) (P) 6-11111 M. McInnes

404 6-11111 CHARONAL WALLY (C) (P) (P) 6-11111 M. McInnes

405 6-11111 CHARONAL WALLY (C) (P) (P) 6-11111 M. McInnes

406 6-11111 CHARONAL WALLY (C) (P) (P) 6-11111 M. McInnes

407 6-11111 CHARONAL WALLY (C) (P) (P) 6-11111 M. McInnes

408 6-11111 CHARONAL WALLY (C) (P) (P) 6-11111 M. McInnes

BOXING

Kalule will defend in Sheffield

Kalule will defend in Sheffield

Kalule will defend in Sheffield

Kalule will defend in Sheffield

Kalule will defend in Sheffield

Kalule will defend in Sheffield

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BADMINTON

Motoring by Clifford Webb

Germany gears up for car's centenary

The West Germans are pulling out all the stops to make the most of this year's centenary of the birth of the motor car.

Ideally they would like the original 1886 single cylinder tri-cycle to be the star attraction of the celebrations.

So with typical Teutonic logic Daimler-Benz decided to build a replica of Car Number One to coincide with the travelling.

Two examples of what must be the most exclusive limited-edition car ever have now arrived in Britain at the Mitton Keyes headquarters of Mercedes-Benz UK.

The little town of Ladenburg on the banks of the Neckar river near Mannheim will also be playing an important role in the celebrations.

Among the things to see are original designs from Benz's drawing board, his letters, a model of the Patent Motorwagen, original documents belonging to him and members of his family and papers concerned with the Ladenburg estate.

Benz was nearly 60 when he bought the house and continued to live there for a quarter of a century. His wife Bertha, who set tongues wagging when she somewhat foolishly but bravely demonstrated the potential of some of her husband's earliest and most fragile designs, continued to live there a further 40 years.

In May 1939 she celebrated her 90th birthday with a parade of veterans over her front door. She died in 1944 aged 95.

If readers are thinking of visiting the "shrine" it is quite easy to find. Just ask anyone in Ladenburg for Dr Karl Benz Square.

Golf's secret

Volkswagen's Golf has been on sale for more than 11 years now and to the casual observer has changed little in that time.



Car Number One, the 1886 Benz Patent Motorwagen. Two replicas are now in Britain.

It slots nicely between some of the biggest-selling competitors in the market such as the Escort 1.6L and 1.6GL and the Astra 1.6L and 1.6GL.

The steering is still a little too heavy at manoeuvring speeds but a sheer delight from every other aspect. Road holding is leechlike and the ride surprisingly relaxing for a car which is only 13 feet long.

An added bonus for purchasers of 1986 VWs is the promise of lower maintenance costs - as much as one-third less according to the company. Mileage between major services has been doubled to 20,000.

What makes it so successful? It is hardly an eye-catching beauty with its square-looking front and far from streamlined appearance. To find the answer I questioned a number of Golf owners.

It is also my view of the present Golf but it was not my view of its predecessor. Among my complaints there were excessively spongy brakes. There was no initial bite and they required too much physical effort.

The gear change improved significantly, luggage space increased by one-third and passengers at last found it possible to ride in the back of the Golf without rubbing their knees on the seat in front.

from streamlined appearance. To find the answer I questioned a number of Golf owners. Their comments ranged from sheer incredulity "if it does not look beautiful you must be blind".

"Did you ever see a car looking more purposeful" and simply "To be candid I never think about its appearance. It just does everything I want a car to do and it does it well."

The latter comment, coming from a driver on his fifth Golf, goes a long way towards the real answer. It is also my view of the present Golf but it was not my view of its predecessor.

VW tackled each of these shortcomings in the new Golf. The brakes acquired feel and purpose, the gear change improved significantly, luggage space increased by one-third and passengers at last found it possible to ride in the back of the Golf without rubbing their knees on the seat in front.

I recently sent some time with a newcomer to the Golf family, the CL 1.6. Up to now the popular CL model has only been available with a 1.3 engine.

What makes it so successful? It is hardly an eye-catching beauty with its square-looking front and far from streamlined appearance. To find the answer I questioned a number of Golf owners.

Extract

The following is reprinted exactly as it appears in a late edition to the handbook issued with the new Honda Accord EXi.

"In setting the button to" then follow three pictorial diagrams "This system will clean any displeasure out and increase the comfortableness in head, upon room heating or cloudiness removing by means of blowing the cold wind out through interpanel outlet. Using method 1 With switching lever located at central blowing outlet being raised up, the cold wind will blow out, regardless of the position of temperature control lever, 2. Set the wind direction by means of fin and dial on the interpanel outlet. 3. Lay the lever down when unused."

Mr J. W. Booth, a Times reader from Bury St Edmunds, drew this to my attention soon after taking delivery of a new EXi last month.

He tells me: "My two-year-old Honda Accord had an excellent manual written in American English with a minimum of grammatical errors and misprints. The new manual would appear to have been written by a Japanese student early on in his linguistic course."

Honda UK told me they have removed the "offending notices" which was apparently printed on a glossy card embellished with a purple ribbon to draw special attention to it. Instead they are sending a service bulletin to their dealers asking them to give purchasers verbal instructions on operating the ventilation system.

Alas, too many issues of the new manual have been printed for it to be scrapped and reprinted. "But we shall try to clean up the grammar next time round" they assured me.

Snow chaos

Why is it that every year without fail a few inches of snow brings utter chaos to our cities? On Tuesday I took five-and-a-half hours to travel 12 miles from my home in Birmingham to my home at Stourbridge. The first three hours were spent in the city centre where traffic came to a complete standstill for half an hour at a time and then moved only a few yards before stopping again.

The West Midlands County Council laid the blame squarely on the motorists. An official said so many Birmingham workers decided to leave their offices early to beat the snow that they caused traffic jams, preventing grunting lorries getting to work on key roads. It is an excuse we have heard before and it is not good enough. Snow warnings were publicized more than 24 hours earlier. The gritters should have been out that night, not the following afternoon.

CAR BUYERS' GUIDE Trade 01-837 2916 Private 01-837 3333 or 3311

Mercedes-Benz advertisement featuring the ALAN DAY logo and a list of various car models with their prices, such as the 230E, 200SL, and 300E.

Bradshaw & Webb advertisement for Mercedes-Benz cars, listing models like the 500 SL, 200E, and 230E with their respective prices.

Ivan Page-Ratcliff advertisement for Mercedes-Benz cars, listing models like the 200E, 230E, and 300E.

DINGLE GARAGES advertisement for Mercedes-Benz cars, listing models like the 500 SL C Reg 1985 and 230E.

Rolls-Royce and Bentley Authorized Dealers and Distributors advertisement, listing various models and their prices.

HOWELLS MOTORS advertisement for various car models, including the 200E, 230E, and 300E.

Mercedes-Benz 200SL advertisement, listing the car's features and price.

Mercedes-Benz 500SEL advertisement, listing the car's features and price.

3 Mercedes-Benz 240D advertisement, listing the car's features and price.

1986 Mercedes-Benz 190E 2.3 16 valve advertisement, listing the car's features and price.

Mercedes-Benz 500 SEC (A) L1 advertisement, listing the car's features and price.

Mercedes-Benz 230CE advertisement, listing the car's features and price.

Mercedes-Benz 200E advertisement, listing the car's features and price.

Mercedes-Benz 300E advertisement, listing the car's features and price.

Whitehouse advertisement for Audi Quattro cars, featuring a large image of the car and text describing its features and availability.

Porsche advertisement listing various models like the 911 Carrera, 911 Carrera Sport Coupe, and 911 Carrera Cabriolet.

Rolls-Royce advertisement listing models like the Shadow II, Phantom, and Phantom II.

USED JAGUARS & DAINLERS advertisement listing various models like the XJ6, XJ6L, and XJ6LH.

JAGUAR CENTRE advertisement listing various models like the XJ6, XJ6L, and XJ6LH, along with contact information for Guy Salmon.

Whitehouse advertisement for Audi Quattro cars, featuring a large image of the car and text describing its features and availability.

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JULIANS OF READING FOR JAGUAR advertisement listing various models like the XJ6, XJ6L, and XJ6LH.

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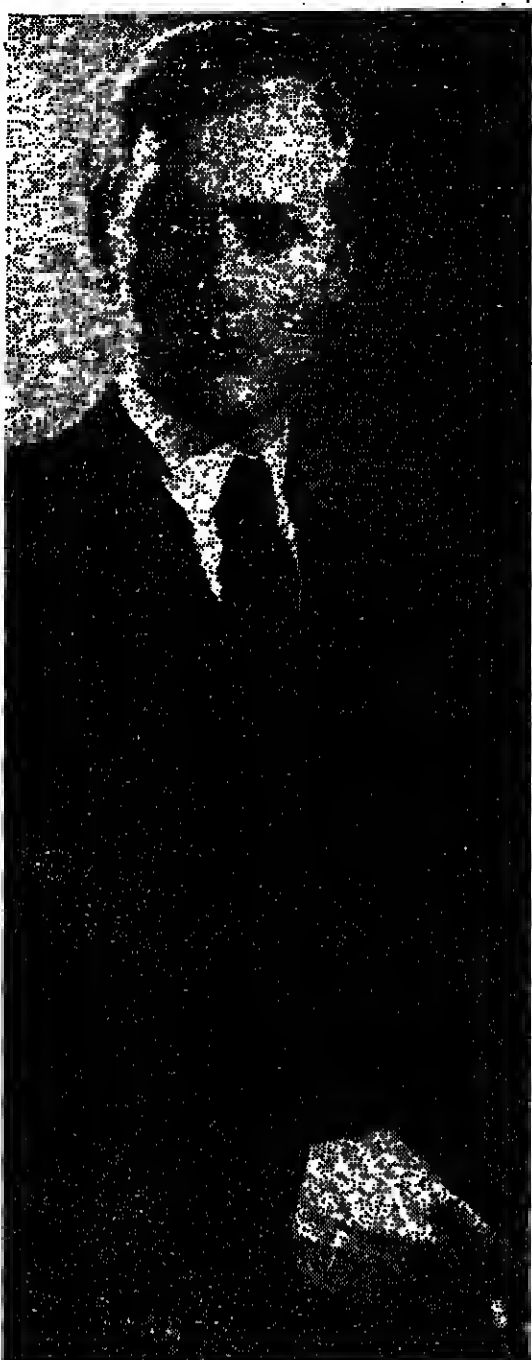
JAGUAR CENTRE advertisement listing various models like the XJ6, XJ6L, and XJ6LH.

Flamboyant progress of the man who planned to be Prime Minister by the age of 55

Heseltine route to Downing Street 'mapped on an envelope'

By Paul Valley

The spectacular manner of Michael Heseltine's departure from the Government, leaving his colleagues sitting rather than starting at the Cabinet table, is entirely typical of his style as a politician. It was Mr Heseltine who turned the otherwise mundane rescue of a West Country helicopter firm into a high political drama...

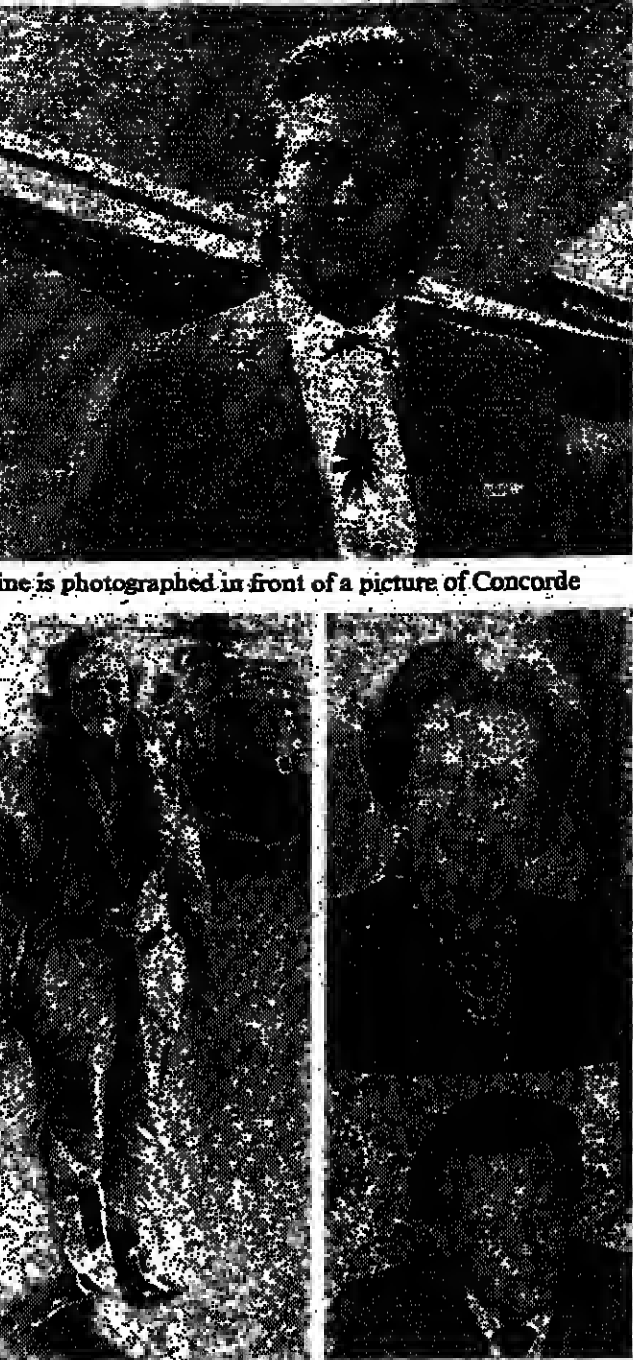


1972: As Minister for Aerospace, Mr Heseltine is photographed in front of a picture of Concorde

1954: Mr Heseltine (with cigarette) in his Isis profile at Oxford. 1967: With his wife Anne and son Rupert at a London hospital. 1983: As Defence Secretary, preparing to board a helicopter and, right, at an election meeting.



1983: As Defence Secretary, preparing to board a helicopter and, right, at an election meeting. The surface... a man they came to regard as a pugacious defender of their best interests...



1983: As Defence Secretary, preparing to board a helicopter and, right, at an election meeting. He is amiable enough on the surface... But he is difficult to get through to...

Threat by Gadafi to freeze US assets

Continued from page 1. Tunisian passports used by the Palestinian gunmen had been taken from their original owners by Libyan security men, he said. 'This is something that is trivial... it is made up.'

THE TIMES INFORMATION SERVICE

Today's events. New exhibition: Images of the Grand Tour. Exhibitions in progress: Work by Leigh Hunt. The Times Crossword Puzzle No 16,940.

The Times Crossword Puzzle No 16,940. A grid with numbers for crossword clues.

Solution of Puzzle No 16,939. A crossword puzzle grid with the words filled in.

Food prices. The average price of beef topside, silver-side and foreleg on the bone is up by about 7p a pound. Road works: The Midlands: M5: Widening work between junctions 4 (A38) and 5 (A38, Droitwich).

Weather forecast. A vigorous Atlantic depression will bring frontal systems across all parts. High tides: London Bridge 1.13, Abbeville 1.18, Dover 1.23.

Anniversaries. Births: Michel Ney, marshal of France, Napoleon's 'baronet of the brave' 1769. Deaths: William Land, Archbishop of Canterbury 1632-45.

Portfolio. Monday-Saturday record your daily Portfolio total. Add these together to determine your weekly Portfolio total.

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Weather forecast. A vigorous Atlantic depression will bring frontal systems across all parts. High tides: London Bridge 1.13, Abbeville 1.18, Dover 1.23.

Anniversaries. Births: Michel Ney, marshal of France, Napoleon's 'baronet of the brave' 1769. Deaths: William Land, Archbishop of Canterbury 1632-45.

Portfolio. Monday-Saturday record your daily Portfolio total. Add these together to determine your weekly Portfolio total.

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